- WORLD/A10
UN: HIV cases top 40M, AIDS kills 3.1M in 2005
- NEWS/A2
More doctors leave RP as nurses, say no future here
- ACROSS/A15
Comelec junks Dy poll protest case vs Padaca
- SPORTS/A19
Younghusbands and RP football make a fine couple

58% want GMA to quit; 40% shun coup, says poll

NEARLY SIX OF EVERY 10 FILIPINOS WANT President Macapagal-Arroyo to resign, even though she survived an attempt to impeach her over allegations of election cheating, a banking publisher said yesterday.

Only 36 percent of respondents wanted Mrs Arroyo to resign, with 18 percent preferring that she go, Pulse Asia Inc said.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Widows wail as Ka Roger celebrates Iloilo ambush

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr. and Delfin T. Mallari Jr.

ON ONE SIDE, THE WIDOW SIGED ON THE other, the rebel spokesperson commended communist guerrillas for the ambush and said the people should celebrate.

The angry widow was Jeanmarie Bil-lerente, whose husband, Insp. Ernesto Bil-

Tuesday, November 22, 2005 4 28 pages vol. 28 / no. 247

Political killings escalate

Newsman, Bayan leader shot dead; bodies of 2 leftists found

THE METROPOLITAN Theater: Symbol of the Filipinos' struggle for identity

By Marlon Ramos
PDI Davao News Bureau
and Amadeo Roque and Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

IN AN APPARENT UPSURGE OF POLITICAL killings, gunmen shot dead a reporter and a left-wing militant and police found the bodies of a youth leader and her husband who were kidnapped nearly a month ago.

Roberto "Bobby" Ramos, 59, a reporter and columnist of the Cagayan-based weekly Bataan News, was killed on Sunday by two unidentified riding-in-tandem assailants of Purok 5, Kinabay, in Banaybanay, Davao Oriental, Lupain, at 7:40 p.m., police said.

Ramos was the ninth journalist killed in the country this year and the second in three days. On Friday, broadcaster Rolando Ey was shot dead by a gunman in front of his house in Tarragona City.

Since the ouster of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1986, 99 journalists have been killed in the Philippines, according to a list compiled by the Inquirer. The National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) put the figure at 72.

"We urge the President and the police to drop their self-serving rhetoric and work genuinely and vociferously for the arrest, prosecution and punishment of killers of journalists," the NUJP said in a statement.

"The President must act to make the Philippines' notoriety as the most murderous and the most dangerous—next only to Iraq—country in the world for journalists," it said.

In Pampanga, Normand Arvilla, a Bagong Alyansang Makabayan member, was killed by armed men in the Gangsa Pantukhidance intersection at 7:30 a.m., police said. His wife and 7-year-old son witnessed the killing.

Arvilla was driving a jeep on work at the Barangay Electric Cooperative II when he was accosted by two armed men who fired three bullet wounds, according to

POLITICAL, A2

Grand Dame ready for another facelift

By Jerome Aning

First of two parts

AFTER ALMOST A DECADE OF neglect and doom, the Metropolitan Theater—fondly called the Met—will be restored to its former glory.

Three government agencies finally got their act together and will be working to restore the "grand dame" of Manila's theaters which is located in the Liwasang Bonifacio in Manila.

The National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) and the City of Manila had set aside their differences and signed a work and action plan (WAP) last June.

In response, President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered the release of P50 million to partially fund the restoration of the Met.

A private consultancy firm was commissioned to conduct a detailed engineering study. CRCS of the theater which began last week. In five months, the firm will submit its report detailing the condition of the Met's structure and how it could be restored.

It took no less than the Arroyo herself to end the feud among the NCCA, GSIS and City Hall. On Jan. 7, 2004, she witnessed the signing of a tripartite agreement among Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, GSIS president Winston Garcia and Fredrick Dichoso executive Evelyn Bautip, NCCA chair.

The agreement was an offshoot of the President's speech during the 2003 Cultural and Arts Conference, where she spoke of the need to make culture "fullest" stressing that one of her administration's priorities was to provide as accessible culture and arts

SPECIAL REPORT

Soldiers raid Leyte village, kill 7 farmers

By Joey A. Gabieta and Vicente S. Latoza
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—SOLDIERS raided a farming village yesterday and shot dead seven farmers, including two women, in what militants said was a massacre and the military termed an encounter with communist rebels.

Two other civilians, some reportedly hit in the back, were wounded in the shooting that erupted early yesterday in a village in Palo town, Leyte, less than 20 hours after nine soldiers were killed by rebel-planted land mines in Iloilo province.

Peasant groups said the victims were peacefully gathered in Barangay San Agustin when soldiers opened fire.

The military said the gunfire first came from the farmers, branding them as members of the communist New People's Army.

But Mayor Rodolfo Serafica said he was "shocked" to hear about the incident and immediately ordered the police to investigate.

Iloilo and the Barangay

SOLDIERS, A7

Journalists in violent settings learn about 3 I's

By Ma. Cores P. Reyes

IMPUNITY, ILL INFORMATION and international law and ICC (International Criminal Court). These were the three I's that journalists from Southeast Asian countries learned more about during a two-day seminar conducted exclusively for them recently.

Using the backdrop of armed conflicts between warring nations and ethnic, ideological and religious groups, experts on the three I's conveyed to journalists the need for international laws and a court of last resort when victims could seek redress.

Massive suffering inflicted especially on innocents and how perpetrators have gotten away unpunished were among the topics of discussion.

Among the resource speakers were lawyers, human rights advocates and journalists.

Journalists who are among the endangered groups in these two settings would be better equipped in their coverage and could give depth to their reporting if they knew their three I's.

"Often, it is the journalists who uncover the evidences and tell the stories that change the world," ICC Judge Sus Pires Song said at the first Southeast Asian Conference of Journalists on the International Criminal Court in Quezon City on May 17-18.

"Throughout history, there have been many examples of journalists who have been courageous defenders of justice," said Song, a South Korean from ICC.

JOURNALISTS, A8

BSP Deputy Governor Armando Zamora shows off a P1,000 bill with the President's misspelled name on it.

GMA foes on misspelled name: The joke's on her

By Michael Lim Ubac and Doris C. Dumlao

THE MISSPELLING OF PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo's name as "Arroyo" in P1,000 bills may have been an honest mistake, but the joke was on the opposition lawmakers said yesterday.

"I hope this is not deliberate," said Quirino Rep. Junior Cua in a press conference of the minority in the House of Representatives.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said a European contractor printed the P1,000 bills to ensure a sufficient supply of the bank notes which are highly in demand during the Christmas season.

"My Spanish teacher told me 'rroo' sounded like 'roho,' which means robbery in Spanish. This is how 'roho,' which means to rob someone," Cagdianao said.

The congressman, a lawyer, pointed out that some

WEATHER FORECAST

FRIDAY: Sunny during the day, cool and cloudless at night with light winds. Partly cloudy and windy with isolated rainshowers are further forecasted for the rest of the week but mostly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

Source: PAGASA

E-mail: pi_news@inquirer.com.ph

Have your feedback: Inquirer Connection at 896-6000 or 687-2000 (Globe) or 683-8000 (Smart)

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Baguio	Cloudy with Rain
Dagupan	Partly Cloudy	Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rain
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Virac	Cloudy with Rain
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo	Cloudy with Rain
Puerto Princesa	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rain
Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rain
Davao	Cloudy with Rain
Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rain

US MARINES' CUSTODY ISSUE

We'll save money, says DOJ chief

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Nikko Dizon

ASIDE FROM THE "VAGUE" PROVISIONS OF the Visiting Forces Agreement, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said yesterday a practical reason for keeping the six US Marines accused of raping a Filipino woman in US custody was the money it would save the Philippines.

"What do you really need custody (for?), you will have to find them," Gonzalez told reporters after defending the Department of Justice's budget at the Senate where he was asked the location of the rape suspects.

"Custody? Nothing we can do unless we declare war on America," he later said.

But while Gonzalez was not optimistic, a Filipino DOJ official expressed hope the US would respond favorably to the Philippines' request for custody before the case's preliminary investigation begins tomorrow.

"We expect a reply before the (Nov.) 22nd. Personally, that's my goal. Or at the latest, before a case is filed, if even in court after the preliminary investigation," Undersecretary Zenilda Jean Paredes-Tin told reporters in a chance interview at the DOJ Building in Padre Faura.

Paredes heads the Presidential Commission on the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA-Com) tasked to oversee the implementation of the VFA. Its heads the task of understanding and has his office at the DFA.

"They might say again I say pro-American but this is a fact—all over the world Americans have the reputation of not protecting their erring soldiers," Paredes said.

"If they're at fault, they (US) give up custody of their soldiers. Take, for example, the Abu Ghraib issue. They won't protect the erring soldiers and they will see to it that it will not destroy relations between the nations because of recalcitrant soldiers," Paredes said.

Asked if under the VFA, the US government could deny the request for custody, Paredes said it be wording of the VFA—that "the Philippine authorities can make a position regarding custody and the US authorities will take it into full account"—was vague.

"It could mean anything. It can mean injustice or let's talk about it, if depends. So definitely, we can't force them to turn over custody," Paredes said.

The mystery of the six's location involved in the rape case deepened, meanwhile, after the Filipina lawyer of one of them yesterday categorically stated his client was detained because he was not in the US in the first place.

Jose Justiniano of the Salazar Spiegel Fernandez & Gumaru law offices said Albert Laris, one of those identified by van driver Timoteo Soriano, was not in the United States when the rape took place.

"He was not there, we have evidence to prove this," Justiniano told the Inquirer.

He said that was the reason he filed a motion in the Olongapo prosecutor's office last week asking for a confrontation between his client and Soriano.

Justiniano said Soriano's description did not fit Laris, but his client would be there for the preliminary investigation on Nov. 23.

Another service man, Dominic Duplantis, is being held by the US Embassy in Singapore after Soriano met the 22-year-old recruit had identified him.

Both Soriano and the recruit insisted only five servicemen—but it was Duplantis' lawyer that presented six Marines on Nov. 10 to Filipino officials led by Paredes.

It was not explained why the US authorities included Duplantis, but sources who declined to be named said Duplantis was in the van, seated in the second row with Keith Silkwood.

MJ expected to arrive today; Gonzalez expects him to talk

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

JUSTICE SECRETARY RAUL GONZALEZ does not expect ex-Morato Brig. Gen. Merlin Limjoco Jimenez to follow his return to the country but he did not see any reason Presidential Management Staff chief Jimenez should be worried on ethical issues.

"I don't think so. If he has some political intentions he will not go to a senior and ask, 'Sir, what's your advice?' Gonzalez told former reporters after a budget hearing.

Jimenez, who did time in a US federal prison after his conviction on charges of illegal campaign contributions, was scheduled to arrive this morning on board a Korean Airlines flight.

Sources said brother Jimenez's name not his alias, Marlo Crespo, was on the flight's manifest, but National Bureau of Investigation Intelpol Director Ricardo Diaz said he had checked with the US Embassy which vouchsafed that Jimenez was arriving as scheduled.

Gonzalez said Jimenez was a free man and faced no charges in the Philippines. While Jimenez's 32 million cash case against former Justice Secretary Fernando Perez and alleged bribery Jimenez was not liable as a bribe-giver under Presidential Decree 749.

Gonzalez said the President had nothing to fear from Jimenez, who ranked the Arroyo administration with charges of corruption in 2002 before he was excluded in the US.

He said Mr. Arroyo had nothing to do with the 2001 million conviction case Jimenez filed against Perez.

"As far as I'm concerned, the President has nothing to do with that, why do you always want to drag the President? You seem to say that everything that happens in this country ... it's the President's fault? That is too much," Gonzalez said.

"Why should she be afraid of him? That is speculative, what he will do or say that if he has something to say he should have said that when he was testifying before Congress? Why? The President has nothing to do with whatever deals he has with Perez," Gonzalez added.

More doctors leaving RP as nurses: No future here

DOCTOR JOSE SANCHEZ IS A LEADING SURgeon in his field but like thousands of Filipino doctors he has had enough and is leaving the country ... not as a doctor but as a nurse.

His office shop in Ortigas City he contemplates his future with two colleagues in a country where the medical system they say is economically sick.

The 50-year-old surgeon with 25 years experience as a lung specialist is just marking time.

Another, not his real name, and two other surgeons agreed to talk with AFP on the condition they were not named or photographed.

Nursing a cup of black coffee, Sanchez says the profession today is not the same as the one he entered in 1980.

"It was different back then. Medicine was a respected profession and money was being spent on healthcare. But what we have today is a health system in critical decline," he says.

Of the 40 doctors he graduated with 25 years ago Sanchez says over a third have emigrated.

"I don't know of anyone who is happy. It seems like everyone is leaving and the government has to pass (doesn't see that it has a) problem.

"We are just another statistic among a growing list of professionals who are no longer in this country," Sanchez says a look of woe was on his weathering the problem.

"When I started it was so difficult getting into medical school. The competition was fierce and the top students all went to very high standards. Today the standards are still high but the medical schools have difficulty filling places," he says.

"The question people ask me is: Why? Why after all the years of study and 25 years of practice am I leaving, not as a doctor but taking a nursing refresher's course and becoming a nurse.

"I honestly don't see my future in this country, and it is easier to leave as a nurse than as a doctor. The demand for nurses far outweighs the demand for doctors," he says.

Three of his colleagues, all surgeons, are now in the US as nurses and one is now the medical director of a hospital in California.

Sanchez said his salary averages around P100,000 a month. That isn't bad by Philippine standards, but the average salary for a nurse in California is around $4,000 a month.

Sanchez denies his motivation is money.

"I have just lost faith in the ability of our political elites to run the country and I'm a efficiency, I don't have to be a rocket scientist to see that this country is just marking time.

"It's going nowhere. Look around the region and our neighbors are leaving as Indochinese Vietnam is starting to overtake us."

One of Sanchez' colleagues, a 39 year-old surgeon, agrees.

Graduating in 1992 many of his classmates have left the country some as nurses and some as doctors for international organizations.

"Our politicians have no interest in the plight of doctors in this country. Successive governments have become complacent to the erosion of the health system.

"Working conditions in the public sector are appalling. It has reached a point where doctors, many doctors, are finding it hard to make a living in the provinces where doctors are starting to starve because they can no longer afford to stay.

"I am not talking about luxury living, but cuts and big salaries. You have to understand that most of this country's 80 million or so population is poor. I have colleagues who have left the country and I would add ethically, as they were mostly working for free.

"Doctors have to eat and educate their children too."

A 45 year-old obstetrician who graduated in 1995 says about half of the 300 doctors she graduated with have left, mostly after returning as nurses.

"Medicine is my life," she says. "I think you enter this profession wanting to make a difference, but here in the Philippines we just don't have the facilities to make quality health care.

"It's pathetic. Others that we have a system where hospitals are closing simply because they do not have enough doctors." AFP

Exodus leaves health system in state of near collapse

THE PHILIPPINES HAS BECOME ONE OF THE biggest suppliers of healthcare workers in the world but the exodus of nurses and doctors in the last five years for higher paying jobs overseas has left the country's health system in a state of near collapse.

At a summit of healthcare professionals called by the Philippine Medical Association recently delegates were told in a conference paper: "The crisis in medical human resources is now upon us. The delivery of health services is being compromised, but how to address the problem before the health system completely collapses."

Jessel Hernan, general secretary of the Alliance of Health Workers, said the situation had become so bad that the country's healthcare system would collapse within the next one to three years.

Former health secretary Juana Cabral Tan, who has been studying the exodus of doctors over the past five years, told AFP: "We are facing a serious problem and we need to address it now before it is too late."

As said the demand for nurses, especially in the United States, is outpacing supply.

ENTERTAINMENT

7 SM cinemas go digital

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

THE COMPANY'S MAJOR cinemaplex chain recently purchased seven digital projectors.

Ric Camalig an, first vice president of SM Leisure Inc., which operates SM Cinemas, told Inquirer Entertainment that the three digital projectors, imported from the United States, were installed in six SM-owned and operated malls.

"There's one each in Makati, North Edsa, Manila, Centerpoint and Southmall, and two in Megamall," Camalig an said.

He explained that SM acquired the projectors in response to local independent filmmakers' adoption of digital technology. Digital movies require less capital. At least two film festivals—Cinemalaya and Cinemanila—have embraced the technology by way of encouraging new talents.

Several digital productions have won in mainstream competitions, and three of the have been rated 4 by the Cinema Evaluation Board, and that granted a 100-percent tax rebate.

"Digital movies are obviously the current trend," Camalig an noted. "SM endorses this development in support of independent producers."

Independent filmmakers welcome move of leading moviehouse chain

Delayed

He said installation of the digital projectors were delayed for a while. "We didn't want to place them in the middle of the theaters," he explained. "That would ruin the viewing experience. But we realized that if we installed the digital projectors at the back or in the projection rooms, we would need long throw lenses."

After the short delay, Camalig an reported, they finally found the special lenses. The projection movie first used by the showing of the movies in the digital competition of the Cinemanila International Film Festival last October.

He said classic for the screenings in SM Manila and San Lazaro," he said.

Pioneer

Shortly before SM Cinemas limited 8-10 films last year, Camalig an pointed out, it was the first to show an Indonesian digital movie (donated by a FILIPINO—"Ca Pekto's "Dalu."

"But that time, the filmmaker brought his own projector [an EPSON EMP5000] to the theater," Camalig an recalled. "So I told him when we last again at the Cinemalaya [last July] that SM was about to open its own digital moviehouses."

Saul Gurrea Jimenez, co-director of the Cinemalaya Best Screenplay and Best Sound winner, "Big Time": "SM is very supportive." Most independent filmmakers don't have the budget to blow up their movies for film projectors. SM's move, Jimenez said, was a "big boost."

"Big Time" begins its theatrical run on Oct. 11, 2006.

Challenge

"We are still in the exploratory stage," Camalig an admitted. "Hopefully there'll be more digital films produced in the next few months."

As for the mall's policy on 8-10 movies—two Cinemanila entries ["Banyan" and "Maldivas Mark, Lola & John"] were also classified...Camalig an stressed that SM was flexible.

He explained, "As of now, 8-10 films are not getting as [sufficient] screens. If things turn around, as businessmen, we will adapt. That's our challenge in filmmakers' Producer quality 8-10 movies that will do well at the box office."

HORA Aurora VILMA Santos

Feminist film fest awardees

HORA AURORA AND VILMA SANTOS WILL BE honored for Outstanding Achievement in Film during during The Feminist Cinemanil Film Fest Awards tomorrow.

The awarding ceremonies at the Shang Cineplex Shangri-La Plaza, opens the festival, which marks the celebration of 10 years of feminist movement in the Philippines.

Other attendees are Marilou Diaz-Abaya, for Film Direction; Lualhati Bautista for Screenplay Writing, and Chari Santos-Concio and Lily Monteverde for Film Production.

OPENS TOMORROW

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OPENS TOMORROW

FROM THE PRODUCERS OF "MONSTER-IN-LAW"

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PRIME

A therapeutic romantic comedy

Daisy Reyes reinvents herself

IT SEEMS BEAUTY QUEEN AND actress Daisy Reyes is determined to be a successful recording artist. She recently released her second album, "Ode to the Irony of Love," a collection of pop, latin and funk music. Of the 10 tracks, five are original compositions. Of these remakes, Daisy is especially proud of "Sus," composed by Gary Pierre and popularized by Sampaguita. The track one was just as good. "I don't allow just any artist who asks me to do remakes of my songs," Sampaguita said, "but I was impressed with Daisy's demo tape, and she did a very good job, indeed!" Produced by Monique Blanc, the CD is exclusively distributed by Galaxy Records.

MMTA

METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX

Filmed FESTIVAL CINEMA

EASTWOOD CINEMAS

Cinema 2000 Walkmall

Blue Wave

SUPER CINEMAS

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall

Cinema 2000 Cinemagic

Cinema 2000 Mckinley

Cinema 2000 Walkmall

Cinema 2000 Walkmall Mall

starmall Alabang

starmall Shaw

Center Mall Cinema

Jade Cinema

Cine Mega

Cine Mega

Cinema Plaza Cinema

METROPOLIS

Lianz Cinema

Lianz Metro City

Plaza World Mall

Bacoor Cinema

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

How to dump a band and go your own way

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO Khobie Nadal's former bandmates Jeff, Aaron and Marco? According to an insider, the boys were sacked. They did not leave on their own volition. All are their personal Cascade restaurant. The boys' services were terminated just like that. Jeff composed "Bulang" and arranged most of the songs in Khobie's album. Last September, Khobie told them that they were going to Oshkosh so they could concentrate on her studies. But a few months later, Khobie contacted only a new band singing the jingle of Mobi-ava TV ad.

Hot potatoes

WHAT gives? Poor Jeff, Aaron and Marco! They were with Khobie when she was just starting out. Now that she's her property, she has dropped them like hot potatoes! Maybe she's just living up to the title of her hit song, "Ang sa Ang Ibang Isasabihin." She didn't tell her former bandmates about her plans ago, ng without them.

Reader's take

HEIDI'S an e-mail I got from Marc ~ol2005_98@hotmail.com, pertaining to the Nadal brothers ang tawid-mata.") sino:

Hi DAD!

You wanna relax! Whatever. Hoax' sounded very much like a replay of what happened to another local band—the Body Mineral band. Should I mention her name, or "huwag ko na lang sabihin"? After being treated as her personalist band (check out her website), she found members were

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Corrupio

saluted whenever [She] was right at my their album released double platinum status.

The reason does the phrase schwabit concentrate on her studies. How can anyone believe that, when she does gigs left and right (check out the website again)?

In one of her own interviews, "In, out, in-out, in-out!" Is this the aftermath of success—once you reach the top, there's no more looking back for people who helped you up the slope?

Well, maybe that's why her management sounds different now—for better or worse, you be the judge. This comes from a very reliable source and is definitely not hearsay. I know you're in the band scene, ask your members friends.

Thanks.

Mares

Weight gain

JOANALYN Mercado gained 10 pounds within two months of her split up with Mark Herras. Is this any indication that their breakup was consensual or was really detrimental to her health (mentally and otherwise)?

And is it true my "Fukuy love" Heidi Mayra J de los Reyes still be seen from Indio. "Iris is Multo-dead. Magsalita na dumating na ako. Panyero. Section of the 14th Golden Elephant Children's International Pilandok. I've been awake who cares the like."

I've been to Andromeda still. Is the Iris an a popular young actor. The mother Dapi sa top ten? Is the young ang would his drawings. Lately, the father resigned from his work. Nope it's not because he wants to take some with the nurse to watch over their gifted child. The reason is he found that his wife has a lover so he's now guarding her like a hawk! Is that that true was it still romance and then have-

ang mental scandal is Extra? It was total. Clue: The young star's climb to fame is a "P-ick."

Comedienne banned

DIDO who this comedienne is? She has a top-selling show but is banned from appearing in all the shows of an as-demand director. They had a big fight about the comedienne's unprofessionalism in the director refuses to work with her ever again. He couldn't care less even if's a good project or he'll be paid big bucks for it. This is an laughing matter for the comedienne. How long can she get a host in? Clue: The comedienne had humble beginnings.

Bolo ahhh!!!

WHEN people ask why I don't look ill, I proudly say it's the Bolo magic. And guess what's the latest endorser of the Bolo Medical group? My childhood idol, Christopher de Leon. He has joined fellow celebrities Kim Atienza, Papa Fernandez, Regine Velasquez, Albert Martinez, Dolphin Diamond and Tony Mosmos to name a few.

The multi-awarded actor needs endorsers products, so Dr. Heidi Bolo insists with pride now that he'll gain his support! Cross your pause. "It's exciting, and very thrilling, to have in some of such caliber as a patron," she says.

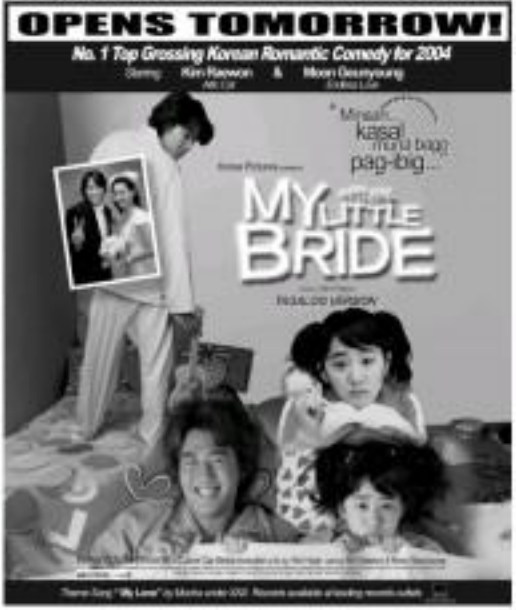
Congratulations

HAPPY 20th Foundation Day to Ateneo Grammar College. I am delighted to be the keynote speaker in their founding anniversary rites today. Special thanks to Mayor Meriel and Jojo Abrenica for the invitation. It will be such a joy to welcome them with the brilliant young minds of AGS.

Thanks

THANKS to talent scout Jessie Arenas and the gracious staff Faye Alex, Rosalyn, Chad, Lovely, Clyde, Gemmalyn, Ajun, Andrew, Estelle and Bessi of Pokeymon's Deck at Island Cove Cavite for such an enchanting evening! I wish I could have frames that when I was there with my dear friend Billy Legaspi.

(Dear: www.tipkalokong.com)



Truck driver dies in Iraq

By Nikko Dizon

A FILIPINO TRUCK DRIVER IS the latest casualty in Iraq, following the deaths of two others in bombings last week.

The worker was identified as Alexander Mon Ilorin, 36, of Valenzuela City. He was killed in a vehicular accident on Nov. 20, Ambassador Yoe Claudio, chair of the Presidential Middle East Presidence Committee, told reporters yesterday.

Claudio said that Ilorin died on the spot after the truck he was driving collided with another truck carrying supplies to the U.S. military.

Claudio was appointed by on his way back to Kuwait after delivering supplies to Iraq.

Claudio said that Ilorin, employed by PAE Logistics, was a documented worker but his employment was supposed to be limited to Kuwait.

"I really don't know how the Filipino workers are allowed entry from Kuwait when we know it is not a safe place for them to be there," Lacson told reporters.

Fact-finding committee member Edgardo Mendoza, Bureau of Immigration regulations chief, said yesterday a panel member had begun drafting the group's report which should be ready in one or two days.

'Garci' spotted in Mindanao, says Ping

By Leila B. Salaverria and TJ Burgonio

WILL MOTTO QUEZON, THE DECEMBERIST committee investigating the disappearance of former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano will meet on it with its report this week, even as Sen. Panfilo Lacson said Garcillano had been spotted in Mindanao.

"Here rallies in Manila or Makkhara. There's a report he has come back, I just don't understand. But that, Lacson told reporters.

Fact-finding committee member Edgardo Mendoza, Bureau of Immigration regulations chief, said yesterday a panel member had begun drafting the group's report which should be ready in one or two days.

But the five-man investigating panel, composed of justice and immigration officials, will not be revealing the contents of its report to the public, Ireland, the report will be submitted to Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, Mendoza said.

"It will be up to the secretary to reveal our findings to the public," he said in a phone interview.

Garcillano supposedly fled to Singapore on July 14 on a chartered jet. The immigration bureau's documents had no record of his departure.

Garcillano is believed to be the man Pennsylvania Macapagal-Arroyo was talking to as unwrapped audio phone conversations that hinted of cheating in the May 2004 elections. He disappeared after audio tapes and CDs of the conversations came out in June.

The fact-finding committee's report is coming in more than a month after its deadline.

The committee, which had been given 30 days to do its work, said it came out with a report, held its first hearing on Aug. 29.

When asked the reason for the delay, Mendoza said this would be answered in the report.

The fact-finding committee was headed by its chair Justice State Prosecutor Emily de los Santos. Its members, aside from Mendoza, were immigration associate director Roy Almoza, vice chair, and State Prosecutors Leandro Tijapon and Silvia Mon.

At the Senate hearings on the Department of Justice's 2006 budget, Santiago since Commissioner Alipio Fernandez said the agency had no records of Garcillano's whereabouts.

"Our records show to you we received the Philippines through our regular immigration reports of our country," Fernandez told the senators.

PRESIDENT Arroyo listens to Health Secretary Francisco Duque during a fire talk on bird flu prevention. / 7 PHOTOS

Google bombers attack GMA website

ENTER THE WORDS "FEELING GOOD" (Edits president) on your Google (Gmail), and you'll get a surprising, if mildly subversive result: The website of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Try typing "incompetent" (Sic), and the browser will direct you to Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye's profile.

The President and her trusted men have just become the latest subjects — or victims — of "Google bombing," a trick used to manipulate the results yielded by search engines.

An Internet-savvy group of young militants has succeeded in making Mr Arroyo's website, http://www.gma.gov.ph, the answer to a search for "failure as president" on popular search engines like Google or Yahoo!.

The militant Youth Outreaching Arroyo's Removal (Youth Junk) yesterday declared a success in creating the campaign to "link Inside the websites of the President, as well as those of her cabinet members.

A query for "miserable" (Sic), for instance, will take one to the official website of the Department of Justice (http://www.doj.gov.ph), presumably a dig on Secretary Raul Gonzalez.

Flop

A search for "liquor" (plural), on the other hand, will show a link to the personal information page of National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales on http://www.i.com.ph, the online databank of the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism.

Finally, typing "incompetent" on the Internet will lead to Bunye's profile on the Office of the President's website (http://www.op.gov.ph).

Google bombing the President's website, as well as that of her subordinates, is just one of the many ways Internet users can express their frustration with what they believe to be a false presidency, said the group's spokesperson Raymond Palatino.

Members of the worldwide web-borne just had enough of the "Hello Garci" controversy, despite the pushing of the impeachment complaint against Ms Arroyo in September, he said in a statement.

"During Edsa Dos, we had text messaging. Now are was the blogosphere and the Internet so media, desire to reach other people and unite in various issues," he said.

Young radicals

The Google bombing was a joint project of Youth Junk and the "young radicals" Internet blog, said Anakbayan martin official Sarah Katrina Martinez.

The group got the idea from Internet activists in the United States who linked the search words "miserable failure" to the official biography of George W Bush on the White House website, Palatino said.

However, it was not the first Google bomb on a Philippine public figure: In April 2004, the late actor and defrocked presidential contender Fernando Poe Jr himself became the subject of a Google bomb. The search words "bumper-to-bumper" (the nation's night mare) directed one to the Binondoo, Bulan and Junior Macaroons website, which showed Poe's picture with cupcakes.

A Google bomb is an attempt to influence the ranking of a given page in results returned by the Google search engine.

A page will be ranked higher on Google if the sites that link to that page use the same search terms as or the text used in the link. A Google bomb is created if many sites link to a page by using a certain phrase.

If that phrase is entered on the browser, the page to which the most numbers of websites or blogs are linked using that phrase will appear.

Youth Junk and its member organizations are planning to stage rallies and protests to raise awareness and projects, such as "Hello Garci" computer games, Palatino said.

58% want GMA to quit

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"A majority of Filipinos continue to favor the President's resignation because they distrust her and believe that the 2004 presidential election was rigged," Ana Maria Tabunda, Pulse Asia executive director, said in a statement.

"Half of Filipinos (52 percent) continue to believe that the President did not win the 2004 election freely, while nearly 36 percent are undecided on the matter. Seventeen percent believe that she won it fairly and without cheating," Tabunda said.

Malacañang downplayed the results of the survey. "President Arroyo is not so much concerned with her rise and fall in surveys as she is with the rise and fall in food prices and employment rate," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye in the Philippine Information Agency.

"The former is an issue of popularity, while the latter is bread and butter for our people," he said.

Tabunda said Pulse Asia understands the survey's findings, which cover only one survey singularly examined, stowing the research effort."

Policy on protests

The nationwide survey of 1,200 people (35 more and said about) was conducted on Oct. 15-27, at the height of the controversy over Ms Arroyo's tough policy against street protests and her ban on businesses attending congressional investigations in aid of legislation.

The survey had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

While the majority favored the President's exit, from 13 Feb a survey by the military and police would be "most inimical to the people's well being."

Two Philippine leaders have been overthrown by popular uprisings — dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1986 and President Joseph Estrada in 2001 — and there have been at least a dozen coup attempts in the last 19 years.

Ms Arroyo, who took over the presidency after Estrada was ousted, has been embroiled in a series since June over allegations she cheated her way to victory in last year's election and members of her family took kickbacks from illegal gambling operations.

The President, who denies any wrongdoing, weathered an impeachment attempt in September when the motion was quashed by a majority of her supporters in the House of Representatives.

Middle class

Ms Arroyo's opponents are pressing their case that she quit, but analysts see little sign of the anger among the middle class that fueled the "people power" revolts against Marcos and Estrada.

"There is still no definitive agreement among Filipinos on the matter of the best individual to lead the Philippines at present," Tabunda said in the statement.

Three parties — one pro-Arroyo, one pro-Estrada and one anti-both — will participate in the May 10 local elections, according to ABS officials. The BSP said the bills were legal leaders.

Constant reminder

After discovering the error, the BSP notified the printers of the remaining bills while the misspelled name of the President.

"A simple Tin carry' should not make this a closed book," Lopez said.

The lawmakers suspected that the heavens might be conspiring against Ms. Arroyo be-

GMA foes on misspelled name: The joke's on her

From page A1 »

criminal law textbook, "*si vova de la cuadrilla*" means "robbery in band."

Another variant of the word, "*Sabuotan*," is used to describe a thief, but not as severe as Japanese, according to Legaspi Sen. Jejomar Aquino. "It's a criminal joke."

The mistake was lamentable because it was too glaring to be overlooked by numerous officials, Aquino said.

The central bank has apologized to the President. Less than P1,000,000 of the P1.08 billion is currently in circulation, according to BSP officials. The BSP said the bills were legal tender.

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About two years ago, the BSP came out with P200 bills bearing the picture of Ms Arroyo, which she was being sworn in by then Junior Bilates Davide Jr during the first moments of the second "people power" revolt. The blue area of her bolero, former President Diosdado Macapagal, was printed on the other side of the note.

National heroes

Criticized that since the country was not being ruled by a monarchy, prisoners appearing on the legal tender should be restricted for national heroes in preference their memories.

The BSP is still determining whether the error was due to a lapse in internal quality control or the foreign contractor's fault.

"We're forming a group to investigate what happened," BSP Deputy Governor demands Serafin said.

"We have to determine who is responsible. If the printer is responsible, they will have a hold-it," he said.

He said the incident was "an opportunity for us to improve our quality control."

A tweaking among the officers of the BSP's bank notes security department shall be among the actions initiated, he said.

Last-minute adjustments

Aquino said last-minute additions were made to enhance the look used for the new P500 bills, which likely touched in the error.

He noted that the European consumer selected for the printing job through a public bidding was a reputable, established entity that conducted similar services to the BSP last year.

The BSP is willing to replace the bills containing the misspelled surname.

But since agreed with shortages in the value of the bills could become a collector's item. "It's the rarity that drives up the price."

"It's only the first shipment. The forthcoming shipments will be enough to meet the requirement for Christmas," Salonga said.

Grand Dame ready for another facelift

Front page, A1 »

versy for the masses.

"We must make culture available ... [and] attractive to the masses," Ms Arroyo said.

Ms Lichi Sharlit the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) will serve the purpose because it is imposing, unapproachable and elitist. The one time the poor will feel approachable physically and psychologically is when they need to," she said.

Curiously, the Arroyo administration's goal of pro-poor and people-oriented programs for the arts to be the masses is the very thing some of former first lady and Metro Manila governor Imelda Marcos' when she pushed for the Met's 1975 renovation.

"The theater is dedicated to a singular goal: To nurture the true, the good and the beautiful in the Filipino in Metropolitan Manila," Marcos said in her message for the 1976 reopening.

NCCA supervision

Under the 2004 cooperation agreement, the NCCA, GSIS and City Hall would put together their resources to spearhead the restoration of the Met to its former grandeur "befitting the country's premier cultural and audience for the masses.

The GSIS, as owner of the 7.6-hectare lot where the Met stands, turned over to City Hall its property and right over such, territorial spaces. Under the agreement, the GSIS recognized the fact that as a social security institution, it could not operate, maintain and preserve the Met.

For its part, City Hall of Manila committed to spearhead the enhancement and improvement not only of the Met's physical structure, but also its cultural and historical significance. It should also construct or improve the Met's access roads, arrive's drive, conference and lecture rooms, library, museum, multipurpose hall or ballroom, toilets rooms and parking areas.

However, City Hall was tasked to conduct the restoration of the Met in accordance with the internationally accepted standards of conservation that the NCCA shall provide.

Restoring the theater

How the Met's restoration should proceed and how long it would take depends on the cooperation of the three agencies.

Lawyer Nate Bendijo, "Tito" Angeles, NCCA executive director in charge of national heritage sites, said the agency's plan was to restore the Met, as much as possible, to the 1978 version. The lead architect there was Otilia Arellano, nephew of the building's original architect in 1931 — Juan Arellano.

But before the restoration work could begin, the three agencies needed to agree on the what Tito was where the delays started.

Angeles said some people in City Hall thought that the NCCA would simply turn over the P56 million to the city government, leaving the building and the construction work to City Hall.

The commissioner claimed that the government could share the rehabilitation work to be a collaborative work of the three agencies.

She added that the NCCA lacks the manpower to undertake the restoration, which should be done in accordance with the internationally accepted standards set by the International Council for Monuments and Sites (Icomos).

The Paris-based Icomos is one of Unesco's two world heritage monitoring arms.

Objections and revisions

The Met Conservation Committee, which is chaired by Manila Mayor Lacuna, is composed of another representative from the city, two from the GSIS and two from the NCCA.

After the 2004 elections, the NCCA conducted a feasibility study, which included the inspection of the property and the preparation of pertinent documents.

In September the same year,

ARTDECO at The Met's ballroom. / RICHARD VELASCO ENCARNACION

the NCCA came up with the P687 Angeles said that while the GSIS agreed with the P687 the following month, the City of Manila kept returning the draft to the NCCA for various objections and revisions.

It was only in April 2005, "after a lot of pressure," that the NCCA was able to get City Hall to agree to the P687 Angeles said.

Personally, however, the commissioner said she thought the contract with City Hall were "strange" because by law, it's the NCCA — more particularly, one of its member agencies, the National Historical Institute (NHI) — that should conduct the restoration of landmarks.

Arizona's track record

"The restoration is being turned over to a non-expert ... as we have in mind that City Hall complies with the highest standards of restoration," she said, revealing that the Manila city government "does not exactly rank high" among conservationists and heritage savers.

Angeles was referring to Arizona's disagreements with the NCCA, the NHI, the National Museum and other government agencies and private groups on the preservation of "culturally significant" sites, such as the de Ayala Building, Mehan Garden, Aprodicio Laurel Park, the Boso and Teodoro Gonzalez, and the San Lazaro race track.

The commissioner also said that people should not be suspicious or impatient if they don't see any actual construction work at the Met just yet.

"Everything has to be in order ... we want to be as close to the original as possible. We'll make sure that much of the original elements there for the new generations to appreciate," Angeles said.

Research work

The commissioner reasoned that to the ongoing restoration work for the Met Quirino statue of US President James Madison in Georgia, Virginia. The research alone took two years, during which the building was not touched. The artists, which changed hands twice, would be restored to its 1930s version.

The seven-year restoration employed, one year somewhere, but also assured craftsmen, architects to do not artbuildings.

Another P56 million was set for the detailed engineering study GSIS, the contract for which was awarded to Soliman Kennah Inc., a Pasig City-based engineering, planning and project management consultancy firm.

Old assets now

The remaining P53 million would be released to City Hall for the restoration of the Theater road, which is a primary concern

Also in the priority list are restoring the floor from Beethoven and dimming the electronic system.

Angeles said the NCCA also wanted to conduct "a deeper investigation of the structure, to find out exactly what changes were made between the 1930s and the 1978 structure."

"If you go to architect a plan, you could have architectural details and designs, and technology that could tell that was built but later were," she explained.

Architecture scholar Edson Cabellis said the century expressed in the architectural style of a building constructed in a particular era is not the product of "painstakingly and hybridization of cultures."

Nabellis may point out that the Art Deco style of the Met was something foreign and forced upon by Asian icons, but as, architecture historians, the art and architectural historiography of the Philippine Art Deco from 1925 to 1941.

He said the Met and the other Art Deco buildings served as representative of the Filipino struggle for independence. "The world blend Filipino, Asian, Spanish and American influences."

Met as symbol

"It is much as her Deco it came to the stunning 'infiltration' of a foreign agent. In another culture, the style can also be read as the means of 'infiltrated' culture adapts and responds to an outside power," the architecture historian said.

Philippine Art Deco Deco, he added, can be understood as "The dynamics of the imposition of power by the colonizer and the demonstration of resistance and empowerment of the colonized."

Angeles said the NCCA realized that its reputation was at stake with the Met restoration project.

"The Met is more than a theater. It is a symbol. If we screw up this one, we'll screw for a decade," she said, becoming known as the agency that ruined the Met. The people may forget the City of Manila or GSIS, but they will not forget the NCCA because it's [restoration] is our mandate," she said.

Soldiers raid Leyte village

From page A1

where it happened was not jurisdictional by members or supporters of the NPA.

"What has angry has been identified as an agrarian reform community. That is why I was surprised when I was informed that the military tagged it as a communist," the mayor said.

The military also captured eight suspected rebels whom they turned over to the Pnp police for custody, police chief Insp. Rito Pacanan said.

The military said it recovered four carabaos, two homemade shotguns, a machine, a pair of binoculars, two hand-held radios and subversive documents.

Sprayed with bullets

The incident occurred around 5 a.m. in a village of coconut plantations and fields, about 8 km from the Palo town proper.

More than 60 farmers and members of the leftist group Hunao Mutsa were inside a small hut when about 20 soldiers arrived and sprayed them with bullets, according to Hunao chairman and spokesperson of the Samahan ng mga Gagi ng mga Bukid sa Hunao (Sagabuh-Kadesh-Mutsa).

She said several people were hit while others scampered for safety. Some were picked up by the soldiers.

"These farmers were supposed to start their 'first day' of tilling the lands given to them by the Department of Agrarian Reform as farmer-beneficiaries," Bagadi said.

Not rebels

She said that while a majority of the farmers were members of Bayan Muna, it was not true that they were NPA rebels as claimed by the military.

Bagadi claimed the firearms and subversive documents recovered from the hut were "planted by the military to make it appear that it was an encounter and not a massacre of innocent civilians."

"By far, this was the biggest killing incident in a single day involving civilians in the region," she added.

But Col. Pablo Bernardo, commanding officer of the 802nd Infantry Battalion, maintained the victims were "active members of the NPA."

'It was an encounter'

"It was an encounter between them and my soldiers. They (the soldiers) were acting on information that there was a group of armed individuals within the vicinity," he told the Inquirer on the phone.

Fernando said two squads composed of 19 soldiers from the 19th Infantry Brigade were approaching a small hut when they were fired upon.

"We just responded," he said.

The shooting lasted about 45 minutes.

The 19th Infantry Brigade is part of the 802nd Infantry Battalion based in Leyte.

But Joel Arcilla, secretary general of Bayan Muna in Palo, denied Bernardo's claim, saying what happened was "terrifying and a massacre."

'Bulk-ums'

He said the farmers and Bayan Muna members had gathered in the village for a "field army" (exercising to the Maoist-mood, in which the farmers would "possess" the land awarded to them by the Department of Agrarian Reform.

"They were there already last night and were to plant this morning," he added.

Arcilla said they even invited the media to cover the event and had informed the village chief about their activities.

But Enrique Granados, provincial agrarian reform officer, told the Inquirer that although they had identified some farmers in San Agustin as land beneficiaries, the DAR had yet to turn over to the farmers their individual certificates of land ownership (Cloa).

The individual Cloas have yet to be distributed because the "mother Cloa" was burned in a fire that hit the provincial Register of Deeds office in 1992, he added.

He said the reconstitution of the mother Cloa was not yet finished.

Rival claimants

Granados said another farmers group had claimed ownership of the land and filed a case now before DAR adjudication board.

Lt. Col. Jefferson Hernandez, spokesperson of the Armed Forces Central Command, said reports received by Cenicom showed that the alleged rebels were in the village to recruit new members.

"If they were farmers, how come our men were able to recover firearms and (ur) farming equipment from them?" he asked.

The village, with a population of more than 920 families, is one of the most peaceful in the town, Mayor Bertilo said.

Bimbo Rasca, spokesperson of Bayan Muna-Eastern Visayas, identified the fatalities as Bertolfo Boria Jr., Eric Nagal, Dolfonio Barbosa, Raul Obina, Boylito Bores, Jerry Almerino and Mina Barcelon, who was seven months pregnant.

He said the 19 wounded were Rusty Campos, 36; Mark Pansa, 23; Ferdinand Montejo, 35; Danilo Ores, da 42; Ismael Baptiste, 22; Reynaldo Boria, 36; and son Bertilo, 20; Richard Mergallo, 30; Tirtlo Caporay and Christopher Vargas, 23.

Bores said that except for Boria, the other nine suffered bullet wounds as well as hack wounds.

Dr. Nestor Pilches said all 10 were now in "stable condition." With a report from Rosemarie Nagpalilan, PDN Visayas bureau

Widows wail as Ka Roger . . .

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tocents, was among the nine soldiers killed by landmines in Bulit on Saturday.

The rebel spokesperson was Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, who said the ouster of New People's Army attacks the past two months in Bicol and incidents unwarranted the country were a violation of President Macapagal-Arroyo's "Tasyo" order.

Rosal also defended the NPA use of what he said was a type of land mine not banned by war conventions.

Twenty-three other soldiers were wounded in the Bicol landmine.

"My husband is innocent and he did nothing wrong," Rosemarie said.

After spending 20 years fighting three separatists and communist insurgents, Sergeant Hilbourne, 48, had looked forward to retirement and to spending more time with his family.

He had planned to invest his retirement pay in a business or use the money to buy a passenger jeepney.

God's will

Hilbourne was set to retire from the service in December next year, along with Staff Sergeants Alexander Lua and Melquiades Bhinnisuyan, who were also killed.

"He had been in many encounters and ambushes in Mindanao but he was among the unit had been wounded or killed. I never expected him to be killed here," said Rosemarie, 46, who now has to take care of their daughters, aged 26 and 25.

"I do not know what to do now but we should accept it because it's God's will," she told the Inquirer at the St. Peyton Memorial Chapel where the remains of the fatalities lay.

Last meeting

The Hilbourne last saw each other on Friday, a day before the ambush, when Rosemarie went to the 47th Infantry Battalion headquarters in Calabog town to get his Christmas bonus at 9:30 AM.

Hilbourne had asked her to buy a ring for daughter Dahlyn, who passed the nursing board examination last month.

"He wanted me to keep it a secret until he came home," Rosemarie said.

She picked a P40,000 outfit for her husband over the phone while his month P30,000 pasahod for Iyo ka Army.

"I will look for the extra P30,000 because he deserves more for laying down his life," said Rosemarie.

Sergeant Lua' widow, Marilou, 35, spoke of her outrageous.

"He was a good provider, husband and father and was smooth in his work. That's why it's so painful," she said. The sergeant left behind five children aged 6 to 18.

She said Lua, 42, was excited about retiring because it meant being with his children, who were doing well in school.

"I hadn't me to think that I would be going up the stage alone to pin the medals and ribbons on our children," Marilou said.

'Spring of victories'

From his bedside, Rosal cited successful NPA-initiated offensives in Davao, Sorsogon, Quezon, Batangas, Camarines Sur, Bukidnon and Davao del Sur.

"The Filipino people celebrate the 40th anniversary of victories over the divisionist fascist and mercenary armed troops of the Arroyo regime," the Communist Party spokesperson said in a statement.

Responding to military accusations that the NPA use of land mines violated international rules of war, Rosal claimed the Armed Forces was ignorant of international conventions.

"What is prohibited is the use of victim-triggered land mines. There are no prohibitions against command-detonated land mines which the NPA uses on a precision and responsible weapon against military targets," he said.

Different landmines

He called the military hypocrites and claimed that the commanded guerrilla ambushes chosen the widespread support of the masses for revolutionary armed struggle.

"The AFP media only to cover up its criminal use of more powerful and destructive weapons," he said.

Rosal insisted that the NPA was using the kind of land mines banned by the Geneva Convention.

"What our field fighters have been using were command-detonated land mines aimed at specific and legitimate military targets such as enemy vehicles of war," he said.

"They are different from the booby trap forts of land mines, which is victim-detonated. That's the kind that was prohibited under the UN Geneva Convention in articles of war," Rosal said in a mobile phone interview.

World War-II vintage

He said the NPA got the materials for making improvised land mines from Bicol War-II vintage bombs found by fishermen and treasure hunters.

"They call that Japanese bombs and the NPA is one of the buyers of these old bombs. The Japanese bomb is still good," he said.

Controlling his laughter, he said: "Why would the NPA not resort to improvising land mines? What are we been conducting a guerrilla warfare. It's our weapons against the superior war machinery of the enemy like tanks and AOC."

Lt. Gen. Pedro Cabuay Jr., commander of the military's Southern Luzon Command based in Camp Elizalde in Luzon City, claimed Rosal's assertion that the rebels were not using banned land mines.

"The NPA is again peddling lies and deceit. They have been using banned land mines and are still using it, endangering the lives of innocent civilians just to advance their terrorist pursuits," Cabuay said.

Malacañang said the ambush showed why the communist rebels "fully" deserved to be called terrorists by the international community.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the NPA had shown its true colors and added that government forces needed to be vigilant.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said: "The President extends her sympathies to the families of the soldiers who died as heroes in the fight against communist terrorists." With reports by Ferdie Quijano G. Avendaño in Manila and Felipe S. Cariño, PDN Visayas bureau

Political killings escalate

(Continued from A1)

Rodolfo Salas, chief of a grocery-based management team—was killed with cooperatives 10k wife and child were unhurt.

Bales, former chair of the Communist Party of the Philippines, is taking care of the victim's traumatized wife and son.

Arcilla was the 68th Bayan member killed this year.

Also yesterday, police said the bodies of Marshel Sapon, 27, former president of the left-wing League of Filipino Students in the Central Luzon State University and her husband Danilo, 32, were found in San Jose City in Nueva Ecija.

The remains of the couple were stuffed in two sacks dumped in a farm at Sitio Tornero, Barangay Palestina, 20 days after they were reported to have been abducted by armed men.

The women, who was pregnant, had two bullet wounds in the head while her husband had one. Both had been beaten and their mouths covered with masking tape.

Since 2001, at least 86 members of militant groups have been killed in apparent politically motivated killings.

Motive not known

Supt. Nestlo Bandin, Calaocan police chief, said Ramos was about to cross the street when he was waylaid by the assailants armed with a .38-cal. revolver.

Ramos, of Barangay San Juan, Gallardo, Laguna, died from bullet wounds in the neck and right cheek. A bullet pierced his right eye, Bandin said.

He said police still had no motive for the shooting, but a local journalist who was a close friend of Ramos said hardcore ruling political camps might be responsible. Police recently raided the area and seized 257 sacks of illegal weeds worth P4 million.

"Maybe they thought it was Ramos who tipped off the police," said the journalist, who requested anonymity.

A day earlier, Ramos nearly had a firefight with the senators after he reportedly rebuked them for selling pirated CDs.

"Bulligan lang kanyan (Ramos might) bulligan would subdue you)," Ramos was quoted as telling them, who were said to have retorted, "Baka lang ang dalagan mo (A bullet would kill you)."

Justice sought

Cecilia Ramos, 45, the victim's widow, said she had no idea who wanted her husband dead. She said her husband was very decent about his work.

"He kept the nature of his job from his family," Cecilia told the reporters at the wake of her husband at the Final Memorial Chapel in Calamba.

"He was very easy to talk with. That's why I'm number big: why they had to kill him. That is really painful for me. All my tears now a panic for fidelity," she said.

Ramos' children—daughter Chesmeryne, 12, and son Ronnel, 11—said they were very angry at whoever ordered the killing of their father.

Archie Gudabag, Kimpan policeboy, said that two weeks ago, Ramos confided to him that he had received death threats through text messages and calls from unidentified persons on his mobile phone.

Gudabag said he advised Ramos "to be slow down on his hard-hitting columns" on illegal gambling activities and possible ties in the Laguna senate of Jun Pedro, Bilibid, Sta. Rosa and Cabuyao, and Calamba.

Gudabag said the operations of video karera and Fruit games machines, which were being played like slot machines in casinos, were a staple of Ramos' columns, Pared Sikreto.

"I also told him to file a complaint with the police. I don't know though if he had filed one," he said in a mobile phone interview.

Bottle-throwing incident

On Sept. 28, Ramos figured in a bottle-throwing incident involving Lagunas Gov. Teresita Lazaro.

Ramos, who was then covering the session of the provincial council at the capitol building in Sta. Cruz town, reportedly caught the ire of Lazaro after he took photographs while she was talking to some board members.

The session had been suspended after two heard members walked out during a debate on a multimillion-peso bond flotation that Lazaro was ardently pushing.

All of a sudden, an irate Lazaro threw an empty plastic bottle of mineral water at Ramos.

The following day, Lazaro made a public apology over a local radio station in Calamba before flying off to Rome, Italy.

Cecilia said her husband had told her about the incident. She said she berated her husband after he decided not to write about the issue in his column.

She said part of the bottle-throwing incident would be included in the police investigation, Bandin said. "I really have no idea about that issue. But we will be looking at all possible motives in the killing."

The Inquirer wire has failed to contact Lazaro on her mobile phone. With reports from Large S. del Puerto and Norman Bordadora in Manila

RAMOS

Journalists in violent settings learn . . .

(Continued from A1)

headquarters in the Dutch city of The Hague.

The ICC was created by the 1998 Rome Statute, a treaty that has been ratified by 100 countries. The European Union has ratified it, but representative regimes have not, among with the United States, China, Japan, Israel and the Philippines.

The ICC came into force on July 1, 2002, to avoid conduct trials on genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity to ensure it could guard against impunity.

Early this year, the United Nations Security Council referred the case of Sudan to the ICC. Hearings are now going on.

RP vexed but . . .

One of the facts Filipino journalists learned was that the Philippines was among the 139 states that signed and ratified the Rome Statute in December 2000.

A second important fact was that the Philippines is not covered by the statute because President Macapagal-Arroyo has not transmitted the ICC documents to the Senate for ratification.

The Philippine and Asian Coalition for the ICC had lobbied hard for the Philippines to become the 100th State Party to the ICC's ratification, but Manila kept the Philippines in the "magic number." Thirteen ratification did not come easy though because it required prolonged debates.

Some Philippine legislators as well as human rights officials, openly support ratification.

UN influence could be a reason for the President's inaction, Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. told the gathering.

If the Philippines ratifies the ICC Statute, offenses of UN troops who are here as part of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) could be placed under the jurisdiction of the ICC if victims do not get a fair hearing from national courts.

Human Rights Commissioner Wilhelmina Bolaños said he was for the speedy transmittal of the ICC document to the Senate for ratification.

Journalists from Thailand, Burma, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia also learned about ICC visa-a-vis their respective countries.

Hitlers, Pinochets, Milosevics

The ICC is sometimes confused with the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

The ICJ deals primarily with disputes between states, while the ICC has jurisdiction over individuals and their criminal responsibility. The ICC would be a deterrent to the rise of future Hitlers, Pinochets and Milosevics who might otherwise get away with impunity.

"Impunity" or unpunished first became a byword in Latin America where dictators thrived while their victims were unpunished. Impunity is a bad word that has come to symbolize the evil of too much power and might.

According to the tradition for the ICC, the past century saw the worst violations in history.

In the past 50 years, more than 250 conflicts have erupted around the world. More than 86 million civilians have died in the conflicts and over 170 million have been stripped of their rights, property and dignity. Most of the victims have been forgotten and only a few perpetrators have been brought to justice.

After the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials involving crimes in World War II, the UN General Assembly recognized the need for a permanent international institution to prosecute mass murderers and war criminals.

Since then, many wars, treaties, conventions and protocols have been written, outlining and forbidding everything—from war crimes to poison gas to chemical weapons—yet no system had been put in place to deal with individuals who were criminally responsible.

ICC, the missing link

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has said that "the ICC promises, at last, to supply what has for so long been the missing link in the international legal system: a permanent court to judge the crimes of greatest concern to the international community as a whole—genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes."

The ICC will be different from the ad hoc tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda in that these two tribunals dealt only with crimes committed in those regions during specific periods.

The ICC is a permanent institution capable of addressing the crimes identified in the Rome Statute in an ongoing basis and the world over.

Crimes

Genocide covers those specifically listed in the Statute documents. These are those committed with intent to destroy in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group.

Crimes against humanity are those committed as part of widespread or systematic attacks directed against any civilian population. Such acts include murder, extermination, rape, sexual slavery, the enforced disappearance of persons and apartheid.

Even included are forced pregnancy and deportation—acts meant to defile and eliminate ethnic groups.

War crimes cover grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and other serious violations of the laws of war, committed in a large scale in international as well as internal armed conflicts.

According to the Coalition for the ICC, the most serious violations of human rights in the past 50 years occurred not during international conflicts but in civil conflicts within states.

Domestic and crimes against humanity are punishable regardless of whether they are committed in time of peace or of war.

The ICC has established a system of reparations for victims, including restitution, compensation and rehabilitation. Rules of procedure on evidence and details of what constitutes these crimes are in the Statute documents.

GMA party endorses House Cha-cha move

By Michael Lim Ubac

PRESIDENT ARROYO's political party, the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino or Kampi, yesterday decided to endorse the move to amend the country's Constitution, which must pass through the House of Representatives of a resolution convening Congress into a constituent assembly that will draft proposed changes to the 1987 Charter.

"We will work for Cha-cha. We will pursue Cha-cha. We're committed to (passing the) Cha-cha resolution at the earliest possible time," said Antipolo Rep. Romeo de Pano, Kampi's president.

He said Kampi members told them that with Kampi's change of mind, the whole administration coalition in the chamber was now united in pursuing political reforms.

"I think Congress will be largely in favor of (amending the Charter), I agree with him. I feel it's here that the House will easily get three-fourth of the membership needed to approve the initiative," he said.

Rep. Arroyo said Sunday that the House could muster the three-fourths vote—177 votes in numbers—needed to approve the resolution.

Speaker Jose de Venecia expected the plenary to vote Wednesday on the resolution because, he said, the economy could not afford to delay any longer the proposed shift in the parliamentary system.

Early last month, Pano himself announced that Kampi had withdrawn support from Charter reform, objecting to the haste with which the so-called Cha-cha experts were now being driven in the chamber.

His fueled speculation that Malacañang was at odds with De Venecia after he said that Mrs Arroyo had been upbeat during the initiative, fueled by reports that her term in 2007. Foreign Aff. Rep. Prospero Pichay also came close to challenging De Venecia for the speakership but postponed his bid indefinitely for the "sake of party unity."

Cagayan de Oro Rep. Constantino Jaraula, chair of the House committee on constitutional amendments, sponsored Committee Report No. 1366, which endorsed the House Concurrent Resolution No. 26, only last week.

Gloria back home after family vacation in HK

PRESIDENT GLORIA Macapagal Arroyo arrived yesterday afternoon from Hong Kong, where she took a brief family vacation after attending the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) Leaders Meeting in South Korea.

Mrs Arroyo was accompanied by her youngest son, Dato, his wife, Inday, and granddaughter, Ina Victoria at the Philippine Airlines (PAL) flight PR 301 that touched down at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 1 at 1:28 p.m.

The President was met at the Naia runway, where she was given hope bouses, by Armed Forces chief of staff Gen. Generoso Senga and Manila International Airport Authority general manager Alfonso Cruz.

Also on hand to greet her were Secretary Edmundo Ermita and top military and police officials.

Wearing a powder blue pantsuit, the President was all smiles as she walked the red carpet despite the oppressive heat of the midday sun. The (Sunday) Mass employees who were also on hand to welcome her and shook their hands. Nikko Bajar

Velarde in-law oversees privatization of IBC-13

By Cliff C. Calasaragan Jr.

AFTER BEING NAMED HEAD OF state-owned Intercontinental Broadcasting Corp. (IBC-13), the not-in-law of Kl Ibaldisi leader Rev. Mike Velarde has taken charge of the privatization committee of the broadcast network. Velarde is known to have his eyes on.

Bro Group Head for Governance Mona Meola said IBC-13 chair Cielyn Redondo said he did not see any wrong with giving new IBC-13 president Mark Allen Jay Sambao, who is married to Velarde's only daughter, a say on how the television and radio network should be privatized.

"Everything will be transparent from the valuation to the public bidding," said Redondo in a text message to the bureau.

He said there should be no conflict of interest in the situation because the Privatization Management Office under the Department of Finance is designated by law to oversee the sale of IBC-13 to private buyers.

Sambao's brother-in-law, Ronaldo Velarde, is also a member of the committee.

With his now-in-law in control not only of the network but of its privatization committee, Velarde's brother-in-law Ronaldo (whose El Shaddai religious sect is IBC-13's biggest blocktimer) would have an undue advantage in his bid to buy IBC-13 over other interested buyers like Hon Ping Pe, the group of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. chair Manuel V. Pangilinan and lead to a smaller sale price for the network.

Velarde's confidant assistant, Mendoza, called the business to insist that the privatization committee was only interested in preserving the interests of IBC-13.

RP, Spain ink pact vs terror

DEFENSE SECRETARY Avelino Cruz and visiting Spanish Defense Minister Jose Bono have signed to find ways by which the two countries, which have been victims of terrorist bombings, could cooperate in defense matters, particularly in the fight against terrorism.

Bono is the first defense minister from Spain to visit the Philippines. He arrived yesterday and will leave tonight.

"We have agreed to explore areas where we can further enhance cooperation in the exchange of information sharing on counterterrorism, exchange of training and education and other matters like control precautions," Cruz said at a joint press conference with Bono at Camp Aguinaldo yesterday.

"It's also really grateful for this opportunity to exchange points of view on matters of counterterrorism and the other areas which (the ministry has mentioned), areas in which we hope to reinforce the cooperation between our two countries," Bono said through an interpreter, Rosa Pamaloran.

The WORLD

Julio Lorenzo B. Garcia

UN: HIV cases top 40M, AIDS kills 3.1M in 2005

NEW DELHI—PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN TACKling HIV infection in key African countries, but five million people were infected across the world in 2005 taking the total beyond a record 40 million, a UN report said Monday.

The grim AIDS epidemic claimed 3.1 million lives during the year, more than half a million of them children, the report said.

"The total number of people living with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) reached its highest level, an estimated 40.3 million" up from 37.8 million in 2000, said the AIDS Epidemic Update 2005, released in 146+ Delhi.

The report first came ahead of World AIDS day on Dec. 1 noted that "the overall number of people living with HIV continued to increase in all regions of the world except the Caribbean."

"There were no additional low national prevalence in 2005," it said.

The survey warned that growing epidemics were under way in eastern Europe, Central Asia and east Asia and that the spread of HIV/AIDS was outstripping treatment efforts.

Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 64 percent of the new infections taking the number cases there to an estimated 25.8 million.

"HIV stigma and the resulting social and legal discrimination have proven to be perhaps the most difficult obstacles to effective HIV prevention," the report said, and these factors "created an ideal climate" for the spread of the epidemic.

Only "one in 10 Africans and one in seven Asians in need of anti-retrovirals were receiving it in mid-2005."

But in some parts of Africa there were "hopeful signs" of declining national HIV prevalence. "Infection levels were dropping" in Zimbabwe, Uganda and Kenya, it said.

"There is ample evidence that HIV does yield to determined and sustained interventions," said a statement by Peter Piot, the Executive Director of the UN AIDS program.

"We are encouraged by the gains that have been made in some countries and by the fact that sustained HIV prevention programs have played a key part in bringing down infections.

"But the reality is that the AIDS epidemic continues to outstrip global and national efforts to contain it. It is clear that a rapid increase in the scale and scope of HIV prevention programs is urgently needed," he said.

In Asia, which has 8.3 million cases, the epidemic was propelled by injecting drug use and commercial sex.

Drugs, sex work and weak surveillance of vulnerable groups were fueling the HIV epidemic in Latin America and Eastern Europe as well, it said.

Mother-to-child transmission was one of the causes for new infections in sub-Saharan Africa, the report said and cascading about 35 percent of all children born to HIV-positive women would contract the virus.

Levels of knowledge about safe sex and HIV remain low in many countries, especially runaway sub-Saharan nations, and notably Cameroon, Nigeria, Senegal and Uganda.

Two-thirds of more of young women between 15 and 24 years lacked comprehensive knowledge of how HIV is transmitted, the report said.

A survey poll in the Philippines two years ago found more than 40 percent of respondents believed that HIV could be transmitted by sharing a meal with an affected person.

The report said access to cheaper antiretroviral drugs had improved markedly in the past two years with more than one million people in low- and middle-income countries living longer and having better lives.

"Treatment coverage in ... Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Cuba now exceeds 80 percent, the report said, adding that better access to antiretrovirals reached an estimated 280,000 to 310,000 people.

"We can now see the clear benefit of scaling up HIV treatment and prevention together and not in isolated interventions," Mark Dybul, US Ambassador (HHS) Director General for Aug. worldwide. AFP

CHILDREN OF THE QUAKE

KASHMIR children stunned and bandaged in a hospital in Srinagar, Nov. 19. Quake-stricken Pakistan braced a night of relief on Sunday after world donors pledged almost $6 billion, and emerald a race to account for seven days as a death toll for survivors of last month's huge tremor. AFP

Russia has biggest AIDS epidemic in Europe

NEW DELHI—RUSSIA HAS THE biggest AIDS epidemic in all of Europe fueled by an "extraordinarily" large number of would injecting drugs, according to a UN report on HIV/AIDS released Monday.

"Russia has the biggest AIDS epidemic in all of Europe ... in the heart of Russia's epidemic are extraordinarily large numbers of young people who inject drugs," said the AIDS Epidemic Update 2005 released in New Delhi.

"There were more than 160,000 registered injecting drug users in the Russian Federation at the end of 2004, although the actual number of users is said to be four to ten times as high," the report assessed ahead of World AIDS day on Dec. 1.

Injected drug users, who were HIV positive, were in turn transmitting the disease sexually to their casual or regular partners.

"About 36 percent of registered HIV infections were related to sexual transmission in 2004, but 2004, that proportion could prove to 25 percent," it said.

Less than 10 percent of HIV-infected were receiving antiretroviral therapy in Russia.

Russia's prisons system has been disproportionately affected by the epidemic. HIV prevalence in the country's jails has been estimated to be at least four times higher than in the wider population," the report said.

The report also called former Soviet republics such as Ukraine with "HIV consolidating its presence in every part of the former Soviet Union."

The number of people living with HIV in Eastern Europe and Central Asia now had an estimated 1.6 million in 2005 that included some 270,000 new infections.

Around 62,000 adults and children died of AIDS-related illnesses in the same period, it said.

Among the Central Asian republics, Uzbekistan "is experiencing the most dynamic (HIV/AIDS) epidemic," the report stated.

Kazakhstan registered new cases of several young injecting drug users, many of whom also engaged in commercial sex.

In the Baltic states, the epidemic continues to grow but on a slower pace than in the rest of Eastern Europe, with "HIV consolidating its presence in every part of the former Soviet Union." AFP

Canadian new scrabble champion

LONDON—IN THE END, THE LONG AND THE right could not quite triumph over the quest and the smart on banter, and thus the contender was finished clutched dictionary for seven hard-earned.

It was with such linguistic acrobatics that the eighth World Scrabble Championships came to an end in a north London hotel, when Adam Logan, a 30-year-old mathematician from Canada, secured 486 points to beat Pakorn Hemsin, 30, a 30-year-old architect from Thailand, 478 points in the final game of a playoff.

Over four days of triple-letter scores and acrimonious quibbling about obscure, and quite frankly bizarre, words, many lesser and high names for 102 contenders from more than 40 countries from Australia to Zambia including the United States. It was a time, too, when language showed itself from morning to the competition for the $15,000 winner's prize.

Was the purpose of the game, the morning of the final? as each inquisitor, Gail Lasker, the national champion of Trinidad and Tobago, who sat in a hotel ballroom where the final took of the playoff was relayed on wide television screens from a smaller room where the two players were cloistered with their racks, tiles and 25-minute timer clocks.

"It's important for me to win them because to know the meaning," said Charles, 61, a former teacher and accountant. New York Times News Service

INQUIRER Platinum Code

US checking out whether Zarqawi was killed in gunfight in Iraq city

WASHINGTON—U.S. AUTHORITIES ARE looking into whether al Qaeda in Iraq leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was killed in a gunfight in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, a US official said on Sunday, but a White House spokesperson said that was "highly unlikely."

If Zarqawi were found to be among the dead, the United States could view it as a major advance in its efforts to quell a bloody insurgency in Iraq, it's time of sectarian debate over both the origins and progress of the war.

Reports that Zarqawi, a Jordanian, were killed on Saturday in clashes between some 150 Iraqi forces and gunmen occupying a house in Mosul, police said. Four more insurgents were arrested.

Efforts are under way to determine whether Zarqawi was among those killed," the US official said in Washington, speaking on condition of anonymity. He provided no additional information.

White House spokesperson Trent Duffy, traveling with President George W. Bush in Asia, said it was "highly unlikely and not credible" that Zarqawi was among the dead in Mosul.

A Pentagon spokesperson said he had no information on Zarqawi, the head of al-Qaeda's insurgency. The Australian-born Zarqawi is believed to have been in Iraq, with a $25 million US reward on his head.

Bush, facing waning public support for the war in Iraq, as casualties mount, has countered critics demanding to know when the more than 150,000 troops in Iraq will come home by saying he will set no timetable for a withdrawal. Bush says such a timetable would be a green light for insurgents.

Over the past week, his administration has launched a counter-offensive against critics including the White House of misusing intelligence about the threat of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction to justify the invasion.

The Bush administration said the Iraq war is needed now on the war on terrorism and declared on the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States.

Zarqawi is blamed for a relentless series of attacks, suicide bombings and beheadings in Iraq, and his organization has claimed responsibility for suicide bombings in Amman hotels the month in which more than 60 people died.

US forces have reported the deaths or death of several Zarqawi associates in recent months, but the guerrilla chief has so far evaded his pursuers and suicide bombings and other attacks have killed hundreds of not thousands of Iraqis.

In May, reports Zarqawi was seriously wounded spotted talk of a successor, but he's never said. The injuries should only seem to inspire his men to step up attacks.

Greater his Ladies named Zarqawi as his deputy in Iraq after he pledged allegiance to the Al Qaeda leader on his index 2004.

Said to be in his late 30s, Zarqawi remains a mysterious figure. Some reports show him in photos, looking like an accountant, others in a tough looking man in wife-beater shirt. Reuters

Abu MUSAB al-Zarqawi, the leader of al-Qaeda's wing in Iraq, in the Nov. 9 T... (AFP photo)

Not enough bird flu vaccine in US to battle pandemic

WASHINGTON—THE UNITED STATES WILL not have enough vaccine to address the needs of its population in case of a bird flu pandemic for at least three years, the country's top public health official warned Tuesday.

US Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt issued the warning after Canada announced that a low pathogenic strain of the avian influenza virus has been discovered in wild migratory birds in the provinces of Quebec, Manitoba and British Columbia.

On top of this, a low pathogenic H5 strain of the virus was discovered in a duck carcass farm in British Columbia.

Although Canadian officials stressed that they "do not see this new risk to public health," the discovery showed the extent to which the virus can spread around.

With the US government scrambling to bolster its defenses, Leavitt said the United States presently does not have the capacity to rapidly manufacture the kind the vaccine could treat victims.

"We have to do nothing short of rebuilding that industry," the secretary acknowledged as he appeared on HBO's "Meet the Press" program.

"I don't want to make certain that we're clear that we will not have the capacity to produce 300 million doses of a vaccine for three to five years," he added. "We're not as prepared as we need to be."

President George W. Bush asked Congress today to muster as much as $7.1 billion in emergency funds to get the country ready for a possible bird flu pandemic.

The H5N1 strain of bird flu has killed more than 60 people in Asia since 2003 and led to the slaughter of millions of poultry to contain the spread.

US health officials are concerned the virus that does not respond to traditional treatments could replicate a 1918 influenza pandemic that killed more than 40 million people around the world, including more than 500,000 Americans. AFP

Post watchdog slams Woodward over leak case

WASHINGTON—THE WASHINGTON POST'S ombudsman criticized associate Bob Woodward on Sunday for withholding what he knows about the CIA leak probe from his editors and for making public statements that were dismissive of the investigation without disclosing his own involvement.

WOODWARD

One of the best known investigative reporters in the United States, Woodward revealed last week that he testified under oath to special prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald that a senior Bush administration official told him in mid-June 2003 about CIA operative Valerie Plame's position at the agency.

Fitzgerald announced a few days later in court papers that his two-year criminal investigation into who leaked Plame's identity would be going back before a federal grand jury, a step he may seek arrests or indictments.

The name of Woodward's source has yet to be made public and so far more than a dozen senior administration officials have denied any involvement in the leak.

Asked on "Fox News Sunday" if he ever spoke to Woodward about Plame, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said: "No, of course not." Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice issued a statement through a spokesperson on Saturday.

In a column highly critical of Woodward's conduct, Washington Post ombudsman Deborah Howell said the newspaper took a "hit to its credibility" and called for more oversight of Woodward's work. Reuters

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Going digital

EDITORIAL

THREE PROPOSALS MADE LAST WEEK BY VIC DEL ROSARIO, head of Viva Entertainment and presidential adviser on entertainment, may yet revive the country's dying film industry. His proposals: give a five-year tax holiday for digital films, exempt from taxes all film-related raw materials and equipment and exempt local movies from amusement taxes for the next five years.

Del Rosario made other suggestions, but the size that they are (as in having a lot of potential) is the first: a tax holiday for digital films. Digital films have been making a strong showing locally and digital filmmaking, given the proverbial shot in the arm, could yet save the entire film industry. Consider the following:

• "Bloodsuyan ng Isang Pantilyong Pilipino," a 10-hour digital film by Lav Diaz, recently made waves in international film circles. It is too long for a single commercial showing, but it could be shown in several parts in special digital film theaters. The boyish Lav Diaz-to says "Bloodsuyan" is an artistic entry, "a film [that] only comes once in 10 years."

• "Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros," a film about an adolescent homosexual who comes of age after he falls in love with a handsome, principled policeman, won the Golden Zenith Award at the 20th Montreal World Film Festival. The film also won the Special Jury Prize in the first Cinemalaya Independent Film Festival in July. Recently, it won Best Feature Film in the 6th Animal magNOVATIVE + Media Arts Festival in Toronto, Canada. It is nominated in the Best Picture, Best Director and Best Actor categories in the Asian Festival of First Films in Singapore at the end of this month.

• "Ala Verde, Ala Pobre," placed second in the best digital film category in the Cinemanila International Film Festival. It also won in the best actress, best actor and best screenplay categories.

Lav Diaz, multimedia columnist Nestor U. Torre, one of the most knowledgeable commentators on the entertainment industry said that it was becoming increasingly clear that "this will be the Year of the Filipino Digital Feature Film." His forecast is coming true.

Digital films are less expensive to produce. For less than P1 million, one can produce a digital film. Torre says the new cinematic "democracy" could open movie screens to productions that have greater variety, freshness and depth.

A recent example of an inexpensive digital film is "Banyan," a lyrical meditation on love, lust and deception. It cost only P980,000 to produce. Its noninvasive moviemaking, that would not have been enough to pay the talent fee of the lead actor, "Banyan" won an A rating from the Cinema Evaluation Board.

Digital filmmaking is inexpensive compared to the old technology of the mainstream movies because no celluloid is used and a digital film does not need a real projector for showing in a theater. Some digital films have to be transferred to film so that they can be exhibited in cinemas. The additional expense of about P2 million could cancel out the savings in the digital production, but creative Filipino filmmakers can certainly find a solution to this problem.

The Shi and Robinsons and also Star Magic could have started screening digital films. The huge student audience is potentially the biggest market for alternative digital films. If digital films could win over the student audience, their producers would not have to depend on S-turning from the traditional filmmakers who do not want to put their money anywhere they call "indie" productions.

One disadvantage of digital films is that they do not star glamorous and big-budget stars like Sharon Cuneta, Judy Ann Santos, Jericho Rosales and Piolo Pascual. But the digital films have made it possible for less well-known but talented actors and actresses to shine. In particular, they have put outstanding performers of the lesbian stage like Irma Adlawan, Dolphie Pascua and Jonie Wilson in the limelight.

The development of the digital film industry could go hand in hand with the flowering of the independent film sector whose theatrical resources are limited. Independent film producers and directors believe that with the help of digital technology, the "indie scene" will grow and talent fees will improve.

Recent developments are very encouraging for digital filmmaking, and if proposals like those of Vic del Rosario could be carried out by the government, the film industry could yet be saved from dying a slow death.

Sullied waters

VIEWPOINT

Jaime L. Mercado

"The gross abuse of a commercial fishery was to name that of a municipal fishery," Lorenzo answers. And abuse we see: about 1.8 million of these rubber-net fisherfolk. More are "limited-timed by the close weeks of big fishes," or by the red tape" involved in filing complaints.

Over the last 30 years, the Philippines spent $676 million in loans and grants, plus billions from the treasury, on fisheries development programs, Lorenzo notes in Asian Aquaculture. "Be the sense of our country resources have become worse."

Almost 96 percent of coral reefs are damaged. "Most of the country's mangroves, estuaries and tidal beds are gone."

Remedies are capable of delivering produces and turnover as an estimated $22,000 per hectare per year. But chemicals, torrents and garbage trash compost of this "most valuable living water."

Two people among municipal fisherfolk, in seven bays of Lagos, Ilocos and Mindoro, range from 30 to 50 species, a survey done by the Department of Agriculture found. "This is the highest in the country."

Population pressure builds up on "the seven fourteen land and water"—the waterlines. One sea of three today lies along these strips. Three people rely on fish for about 10 percent of their protein. This threat the ecology to 10 percent. Fishes the seas yields fishes their demand for protein reserves on rivers that are often eroded from surrounding deforestation.

As the Laguna Lake experience shows, pollution will swell, people circumvent the law. Thus, the fatalities of Philippine bays more of

Lessons

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

WHAT TO DO WITH PHILIPPINE EDUCATION, which has gone on a tailspin for a couple of decades now and is wrecking the knowledge gap between the country and its neighbors?

I've read several interesting proposals of late, which have to do with reviving the curriculum, improving teacher education and quality, changing the medium of instruction method, and expanding the range of the private school system. But the most interesting proposal of all is the one that says, in effect, that we should stop trying to improve education, we can change pedagogical methods, we can build more classrooms, but we were destined to be poor and weak if it will matter. The best way to catch up is to abandon it by example. Because much you kids the science of honesty, integrity and responsibility, lessons as much you try to drum the lessons into their heads with the help of lies built on their basis, it will remain poor and weak as a result.

The sense is right here. You cannot teach kids to value education if they can take pillars of education wanted in this way. The public school teachers themselves say style that they have to pass students to graduate in the system, even if they have not learned a thing.

Before anything else, give the teachers better pay. If we can give soldiers increases in pay because they defend the physical life of the nation, we can give teachers increases in pay because they defend the spiritual life of the nation. The soldiers are worth it, the teachers are worth it. I propose completely unhesitating giving the salaries and emoluments of Cabinet officials and congressmen to the public school teachers. Brothers hold hands. Cabinet officials and congressmen to the teachers.

Second, teach Philippine history as every Filipino, not just the kids. I'll wager that if you give a test to Philippine history to the students of Mahatma Gandhi, the Senate, the House and the judiciary, more than half of them will flunk it. I'll wager that if you ask the same people to name the National Anthem and wrote Dasmariñas Makabayan, the majority of them will flunk it. The reason why country has no future is that it has no past. The Jews were united to write for ages because they did not have a home to speak

Some licensee members are up against Ferdinand Secretary Michael Defensor (for throwing open their logs to anyone) from. His administrative order on "Special Uses of the General Zone" has been signed but memo numbering before evidence, the senate to hear. This opens keys to the rich by drawing on the natural forests.

Alternative approaches are needed other than force-fed demand for more police or armies. Think, Defensor, Lacandan suggests. Who was gone to Sabetchi, banded and created fishing associations, initiated an higher rate municipal taxes? Sabetchi and "mark" for over 100 years ago. Preserves can also be found in Brazil, Sri Lanka, the Ivory Coast and Papua New Guinea.

Under "mark," they would have exclusive rights to fish in designated grounds. Fisherfolk would acquire a stake in implementing rules most convinced and area closure so catch quotas. This approach is "acceptable to the culture, of makeup of our fishing villages," and it's only just to give fisherfolk control over fishery resources as these areas.

Its argues also for more rigid standards for science-based conservation of marine ecosystem. The drawing master conversely in Apo Island, Negros Oriental, banned up by Gilliam Dalton, "Apo Island has gone from a barren reef to a super-rich protected area, where educated, aware's. Can ignore fish and Bunch fan. Miguel Bay are reviving moribund fisheries by integrated coastal management programs that include mangrove forest, limited artificial reefs, and income-generating projects.

We've pushed the new profitable clean and income-generating, save these natural habitats, restore some 1,000 marine sanctuaries, fishery biologists and oceanographers to set safety down-based indeed, "Troubled Waters—A Call To Action." Reforms to curb imported waste and saddling of oceans must be adopted if a local rich are to stop accusing and usage of dynamite. Please see to so-called waters.

E-mail: jaime_mercado@pacific.net.ph

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Ricardo Saludo
Officer-in-Charge

It was such a thrilling if grand duet I read about the recent festivities framed during the home of the late National Artist and novelist F.V.M. Gonzalez on the Cliff Hilltop campus. I have good memories of that home as we spent there many a delightful tea or some other fare and wine Sunday-would have to be famous-type outings. That home was a treasure not just of his works but of those of other writers, too, as well as precious memorabilia, art objects and artifacts. I understand from Cecile that Ateneo Rector Fausto Gomez SJ and his team quite outdid the legend novelist of Wild, who passed away in 1986, might have been framed too.

It's fascinating that in a site so celebrated Wild's stock hardline that Sept. 8 (which explains his nickname) is the birthday of Mother Mary—but I no longer think that way (since Baglock departments to various universities and schools have used abroad some of his old books. There, she said, "showed his life-long devotion to writing, art and humanity. He apparently did did not finish the third famous book he promised.

I talked about this topic years with Cecile Alfonso, at the time of publishing the PCIJ's to the controlling ideas governing societies such mishap. Those FP favorites we redirected to Filipino and other colleagues, and a number of them are viewed representative of the nation's cultural and scientific wealth. Let's safeguard them.

I'm glad the agencies have made a closer scrutiny of the frequent uses of Education buildings and realized it has been shrinking over the years as other expensive uses proliferated. This year's budget is reflected in the agency's performance, which, in turn, is based on offices' per people's competitiveness to this age of fierce global competition. Still, it's heartening to see modest from many people there very good faculties have made good. For starters, above obvious, Deputy Speaker Jerry Salapuddin, the son of a prior Bukidnon trainee, who, in a rising fiscal, RENT money to the province's path a thing as school could be begun to train this phenomenon every morning. Fine day he followed those to a place where he saw those all-around before what seemed like an impressive person started to be found. The other bold fact followed that he matured to join them. A Dumaliand lawyer, Salapuddin is now one of the highest-ranking Muslim leaders in government.

The story of Baguio Rep. Maurice Domogan is just as inspiring. He was the third when he was 2 years old and he and his sister were separated. Their father worked as a miner in Lepanto Mines, and Maurice was provided with possibilities in the extensive area of those files while his sister gave up with their grandmother in Laguna. The siblings saw each other again when they were already in high school. One of them, the eldest, was a Mines-related teacher in school. Domogan had to borrow an oversized hanging to attend a junior-senior prom, which, in his words, "made me look like Santino" so that he then refused to go with him. That humiliation, however, provided Domogan an eye-opened man his memory and hope him going in the face of extensive difficulties.

After high school, Domogan moved to Baguio City and found and did a squatter's house by a creek for P12 a month. He took odd jobs to support himself through liberal arts at what is now the University of Baguio. He joined scramble, became a student council president and was a three-year point taught in high school, living from the Baguio and Kadaklan's tribes, he succeeded in getting a scholarship with the help of the Commission on National Integration to enter the law school of Philippine Colleges, then which he graduated in 1972. By that time continued to run for councilor of Baguio and learn there he went on to become to show some city mayor and now serves terms representatives. Domogan was one of this legislature's cadres of the and impeachment move in the House.

Women in film

AT LARGE

Rhea Jimenez-Duval

Rita endless suffering on the hapless heroine.

The lead actors in film in the tenth consecutive year of Metropolitan Filmfest, Inc. have found their work-like choices and aspirations impressed to those extremes of image. There is very little room, even in present-day Philippine society, for women to be anything other than pretty or sexy. Or to be anything but at the receiving end of the intolerance, prejudice and cruelty that their stories portray.

Actresses are not allowed to be women with real problems and real concerns. Actresses are not allowed to be women who are successful, independent and strong. Actresses are not allowed to be women who are ugly, fat, old, poor, sick, disabled, abused, abandoned, unloved, unlovable, unlucky, unfortunate, unhappy, unsatisfied, unfulfilled, unsuccessful, unpopular, unattractive, unsexy, unwanted, unneeded, unappreciated, unrecognized, unrewarded, unpaid, unemployed, underpaid, overworked, underfed, overfed, undernourished, overweight, underweight, underdeveloped, overdeveloped, underage, overage, underqualified, overqualified, underpaid, overpaid, underpaid, overpaid, underpaid, overpaid

VFA with Australia?

IT WAS BEEN REPORTED THAT THE Australian government has proposed to the Philippine government a military assistance similar to the RP-US Visiting Forces agreement. Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz tried to justify such an arrangement on TV, but he ended up admitting that the costs would be for the account of the Philippines.

It would be recalled that, not too long ago, Australian Prime Minister John Howard carried the lie, if not downright, of more than twelve terrorist made the unsolicited preposition for Australian troops to pursue "terrorists" beyond their country's borders and even inside the territory of other Asian states, as a corollary to the preemptive strike made by the United States and Great Britain when they led the Coalition of the Willing in their naked invasion of Iraq.

If VFA is worse than the Military Bases Agreement (MBA) originally concluded in perpetuity and for free. When Secretary Alberto Romulo proposed a regime similar to the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) obtaining in Europe and elsewhere, the Americans denounced it as "Cashier Diplomacy." Since, for more than half a century, the US paid nothing for the bases.

Strategy, who understood that the MBA served US interests only, sought for its abrogation. However, Thomas Jefferson observed an unconscionably long interval between the enunciation of a principle and the practical application of the principle.

Is it time for Filipinos to remember the Philippine-American War, which was started by the US in order to suppress the Philippine Revolution, and which resulted in the death of more than 1 million Filipinos?

—ANTONIO C. DELOSO
Quezon City

MILITANTS in dress on the streets in Bangsa in protest EVAT

Overcoming the anti-Muslim bias

SOUTH COTABATO BISHOP DEOGRACIAS Iñiguez of the Philippine Human Development Network on the anti-Muslim prejudice in the country, concluded by saying that the bottom line is: Unless we take steps to eliminate that prejudice, the Mindanao conflict may never end. (Phil. Star, 11/19/05)

I am only suggesting the following steps to help Filipinos overcome that prejudice:

(1) Congress should pass a law prohibiting media people and establishments, print or broadcast, from unnecessarily tagging a suspected or convicted offender with his/her religious affiliation or belief.

(2) Remove all literature promoting racism (such as mere-mores, "Florante at Laura," and all those which unnecessarily portray Muslims as evil and non-white) from the classroom, or, please, schools, because and the like) from our educational curriculum or system.

I do not understand why we consider Philippine a nation of born whites (for only white/non-white distinction in the country) in spite of having blackened the image of Muslims through his book "Florante at Laura." That book has Muslims for villains who could only be turned from villains by embracing the Christian faith. Worse, we teach that book in schools! It is any wonder that even before a Christian could ever score a Muslim, he/she already has a negative opinion about Muslims?

(3) Include, for compulsory reading in our educational curriculum or system, the book of Cesar Adib Majul's "Muslims in the Philippines," a history of the Moros from pre-Spanish era. It shows that even before the arrival of the Spaniards in the islands that was eventually called the Philippines, the Muslims were already established and had a full-fledged state, government and system of laws. In fact, the first name of Islam was a political and economic power in Asia.

The country can only claim a glorious past prior to the Spaniards by recognizing the Moro history as its own.

(4) Media establishments, print or broadcast, should not employ or appoint, officials or commentators/writers who manifest prejudice or bias against any individual or group of people, by reason of religion, ethnic affiliation, gender or political belief or affiliation. If such a person has been employed, he/she should be removed.

The lawyers can take the first step by removing Nestor Tulfo as commentator. He has shown a strong anti-Muslim prejudice.

—MACAPADAN B. MACABALO,
United Muslim Federation of Ethnic,
2nd Floor, Door 20,
Cebu Coliseum Complex,
Gen. Alejo Street, Cebu City, 6000

The rape of Malacañang

I WEPHED WITH GRENADE TAN VIOLATED former Senator of Malacañang Palace surrounded with barbed wire consequences as shown on TV. But why were there no photos of the Palace in that issue published in the newspapers? Are news reporters gagged by the imposition of the collective presidential regime?

According to my husband Godofredo O. Perico, a veteran, Malacañang looked like the Japanese garrison in World War II, without the bunkers. And the statue of Rizal in front of Malacañang is a symbol. Police against communist civilians who are not enemies of the State was reminiscent of the Marcos regime during which soldiers of the Philippine Constabulary saved like mad dogs attacking any person without provocation.

Moreover, the Garang Republic also issued by President Macapagal-Arroyo sounds like the New Society that President Marcos used and would make our country "great again."

The similarities are simply scary. Don't they think? Sir, have no fear, there is someone to mark dangers.

—FLORENCIA ESTRADA PERICO,
47 Rizal Street,
Barangay Cannantingan, East,
Canaman, Camarines Sur, 4406

Hunger worse than lethal injection

CONTRARY TO THE CLAIM OF THE Arroyo administration, any increase in the prices of oil products will definitely affect the poor and the middle class and slowly will already hit every citizen of the country. It cannot be denied by every thinking individual that the production of goods and their delivery to the market and to the consumers are dependent on oil-based electricity. It can be expected that all basic commodities will be affected by the third-working hour (longer and deprivation will then remain the poor's daily fare.

Poverty and hunger are outcomes of human rights, particularly the people's right to adequate income and delivery (using), which right includes enough food, decent housing, education, health and sanitation.

The Philippine government has committed to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG) as minimum mechanisms for the eradication of poverty and hunger. This particular goal has, in fact, been a big priority of all administrations since the 1980s. The reality however is, food poor families increased from 2.4 million to 2.1 million in 2000. Given the present realities, the campaign for the eradication of poverty remains an uphill climb due to different factors which include, among others, defective laws, policies, plans and programs, EVAT included.

Surely more than anyone, it is the poor who will again bear the brunt of the hikes in EVAT. The only thing that is clear here is, with the billions of pesos in taxes the government is out to derive, it will be able to pay the country's debt to foreign creditors and prop up its image. The government may be able to collect more, but with the prevalence of corruption everywhere, will the people certainly benefit from higher taxes? Meanwhile, the hard-working Filipino, the unemployed, and those with meager income, should bear with continued poverty and suffer a slow death due to hunger, a corrupt government by behind laziness.

—LEONORA O. GOMEZ,
deputy director for operations,
WHP Manila
lgomez1939@yahoo.com

Cockfighting ups bird flu risk

I HOPE THE GOVERNMENT WILL HEED Malacañang's advice and impose a total ban on the importation of fighting cocks to help prevent the H5N1 bird flu virus from spreading. (PDI, 10/31/05) In fact, even if the ban by mainly a serious threat, officials should prohibit cockfighting. It is a cruel "sport" that should have been outlawed years ago. The poor birds are pumped full of steroids and fed with drugs specifically to make their fights as deadly.

Before they die, the roosters suffer from broken bones, gouged eyes, gaping wounds, and other painful injuries. The loss may to stop cruelty to animals and the spread of bird flu is to stop using chickens for fights to begin.

—ALEX ABEL,
mail.abel@gmail.com

Rage and action

THERE IS A REMINDER TO COMMANDER Quirino' minions, "masses," which came out on 10/30/05, 18, 2005:

Carry on, Dr. Quirino. Rage against the dying of the light as Dylan Thomas has said. And we, the people, rage with you.

We stand behind you in upholding our agenda: the return to Malacañang. With your words, the oppressed whose voices have been muted and whose freedom to move feelings suppressed, are given the chance to speak out their grievances and seek the truth that they deserve.

Sadly, many have remained chained to apathy. Many have been deceived by Malacañang's propaganda which promises always to usher in hope with truth and promises of progress which turns to come a lie as shown by the increasing gap between the rich and the poor.

Because of this, the time we need people who would dare to wield the pen as an instrument of freedom, the time we need people who would have police with chrome and guns, and now even, the flames and water cannons.

Now is the time for the Filipino people, Muslims and Christians alike, to stand united and to challenge the so-called intellectuals and opinion makers to join the struggle of the working masses who need a hand in coming an inspiration and internal revolution.

We support a great nation, we can do it again.

—JEN DELA CRUZ-ROBLES,
vice chairperson,
Akbay Quirino
People' Alliance (PAPA),
#1 2 Mapagbigay St.,
Brgy. Pinahan, Diliman, Quezon City
en.papi@yahoo.com

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InfoBox

Do you support DENR's decision to allow Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile's logging firm to renew operations in Samar?

NOBODY
—Carlito, 45, army

NO. It will only open doors for other logging firms to operate
—Fernando Jose, 34, Angeles city

[NO] will not allow renewal of [Sen. Enrile's] logging firm in Samar because it is damages the environment.
—Darwin L. Loreto, 28, Roxas City

Asks and again I another favor to judgment I believe it!
—Aurelio Loreto, 50, Sipocot

Hence, DENR decision to favor of SJIC of 25% is an "economic payment of a political debt".
—Ely delos Santos, 45, Accounting City

not. Like just down that nothing to safe & secure.! Cons & income tax just a printing/not dying/not to all 70%.
—arnold Rendon, 28, mangaldan, pang

NO OPPORTUNITY JUAN, NONE!
—mando regan, 65, Roxas City

No. In the, a one of his duties has no respect for nature. He can and the people of Samar who love their forest.
—Justin Santos, 25, Tacloban City

not their should protect we forest and not to be used as political lackeys to supporters.
—arturo t. Loreto, 62, Angeles

No. Selective or otherwise, logging is always a form of human intervention with the balance of nature.
—mario cruz-tondo, Angeles city

not, not to Samar or anywhere else...
—Arnold Rendon, 28, mangaldan, pang

NO! History will be never grateful. If Sen. for the days logging operation to Samar.
Regards to Sec. Rubio/DENR ...
—Rodino Rivera, 38, Sta. Maria Bulacan

hahaha!! DENR is responsible institution, let's just say Defense supports logging in Samar. Stop destroying Samar!
—Alex Rivera, 33, caloocan city

Do you agree with Malacañang that the 'Hello Garci' scandal is now a closed book?

I disagree because people want the truth and nothing but the truth.
—Jocelyn Santos, 25, Tacloban City

no! their should protect we forest and not to be used as political lackeys to supporters.
—arturo t. Loreto, 62, Angeles

No. Selective or otherwise, logging is always a form of human intervention with the balance of nature.
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—Alex Rivera, 33, caloocan city

hmm.
—alex mercol, 48, caloocan

The book is closed by Malacañang, but there is only a cover and no pages inside. Haha! I am sorry. Thank!
—Rodino Rivera, 38, Sta. Maria Bulacan

NO. It spent of if Filipino people sit whole truth has not yet come out. If right of example in public concerns is being violated.
—Rondina B. Mariano, 21, Gen San city

hello garci's scandal will only be a closed book. If gentlemen himself will not have a case if from
—daniphor arches, 42, Bacoor, cavite

No answer is NO. How can we close a hello-Garci scandal without a proper broad figurines.
—Jerry rosa, 40, manila

yes! it is not truly non-economy improves economy.
—Fernando Jose, 34, Angeles city

Yes, malacañang has softened Garci's DEAD. A dead man can no longer "... may his soul have to hell.
—chris, manila

Yo este no! because his forgotten already, but since it has long been resolved no time it issue surfaced—the OJB case?
—a.candelita, 18, pc

dont judge friends by its cover, judge behaviorism by words of "hello garci" scandal is closed a book!
—mando regan, 63, davao city

I think long "hello garci" issue long forgetting coming psychological industrialization by encouraging corporate tune of GMA.
—Hydee Mirick, 30, Pasig

no. It should be closed open doors for every Filipino to hope for the truth to come out. Each 1 must not put on down...
—Vely elba, 20, calumpit city

It's a closed if hands of hello Garci, it seems of truth will still come out! =D :) :) (:)))

—mando regan, 65, davao city

long must be dreaming!
—rosalina rivera, 34, zamboanga

hello garci is never over. It is many hanging in of minds of every Filipino until LIKA is made. I answer of her grand lacking.
—roland reyes, 38, ilijan city

A big NO! Only garci himself hardfighting under will contact a close friend.
—J. Reyes, Bislig City

A passin involved in of Garci scandal was an explanation on public if that not what's CLOS.
—Gracia Sinampaga, 38, Davao City

Message to the politicians: What will finally bring peace and prosperity to our nation?

Hill Resolution
—vic luap, jr., 67, a carver

pls. stop politicking and focus on ur work, and strategy out and bring Filipinos (again) eventually making every effected at peace
—JAN DALALIAN, 21,
(20) (0)

Cooperation and Settlement of country.
—Rodrigo G. Samonte, 58, Surigao City

politicians, keep any mga promise ng at ingatan na ma-fulfill ng mga susunod nyo kapit, nang sa gayon magtuloy-tuloy ito kapa ng Ilang taon.
—josephine esguerra, 26, bacoor cavite

RESOLVE UNEMPLOYMENT! will finally bring PEACE & PROSPERITY to our full life.
—manny, 42, davao city

Stop bureaucratic corruption, implement social justice, respect human rights & uncover genuine independence.
—Emelia F. Bilbao, 40, Alcantara/Cebu

Assume yourself in a standing something that gives you purpose and meaning, do the kind of things that come from the heart.
—rizza almonte, 21, cdo

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Across the NATION

Comelec junks Dy Jr. case vs Padaca

DY JR

By Wilarmor Visaya Jr.
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

ILAGAN, ISABELA—THE SECOND DIVISION OF the Commission on Elections has dismissed the election protest of former Isabela Gov. Faustino Dy Jr. against neophyte politician Ms. Grecia Cielo Padaca for its insufficiency in form and substance.

Dy's protest has "failed to comply with the mandatory and jurisdictional requirements of alleging the specific precincts and grounds of the protest," said the Comelec resolution promulgated on Oct. 25 and signed by Commissioners Mehol Sadain and Florentino Tuason Jr.

The office of Governor Padaca, a polo-cavalry farmer broadcaster, received a copy of the resolution on Nov. 7.

The protest was filed by Dy Jr., the eldest son of Faustino Dy Sr. who ruled the province for more than three decades, following allegations that Padaca was supported by the Reno Bunpis's camp and that her May 2004 electoral victory was marred by massive violence, terrorism, and intimidation.

Dy questioned Padaca's victory and asked the poll body to void 265,355 ballots in Isabela's 35 towns and in Cauayan City.

He cited "massive violence, terrorism, and intimidation committed by the BPB in conspiracy and in connivance with [Padaca] to enhance her candidacy."

But the Comelec said the allegations were "not proper" for protest cases because the acts complained of were committed during the campaign period, before the casting of the ballots, or the preparation and transport of returns.

PADACA

No deadline for successor of Palparan

SOUTHERN LEYTE, Mid. (MindaNews/Sunstar) — Southern Luzon, 4th Infantry Division commander, retired Gen. Jovito Palparan, may have been "a purveyor of optimism when the latter wound to crush the insurgency problem in the region within six months to one year."

But Romeo said that given the complexity of the problem, it may hard to predict when the problem would end.

"It would be shorter [than six months]. It's a matter of enlightening the people. I hope we could replicate Southern Leyte in this area," he said.

Palparan made the Southern Tagalog area his command in 6th ID chief in February, his months into his two-year stint, he was pulled out from his post amid pressure from some Senate congressmen who threatened to vote for the impeachment of President Macapagal-Arroyo if the controversial general was not removed from the region.

Romeo, who hails from Masantol, City, said Southern Luzon's "poor accessibility to where the people have rejected the insurgency because 'political leaders make available government services to the villages.' The province has been declared insurgency-free.

Jose Arbasia, PDI Visayas Bureau

Statue causes stir in Davao

DAVAO CITY — RISEN Christ's nudity in the eyes of God—but a replica of Michelangelo's naked statue of David, which was built near a coastal town has been sweeping almost for several weeks already.

Even it was a debate between members and supporters of the Catholic Church, a work of art, commissioned of the century's Italian sculptor Michelangelo Buonarroti first came up with his masterpiece in Florence, Italy.

Councilor Angelo Librado Ortiniilad said she could not have raised a hand if the statue was built somewhere else, not near a motel.

She said this would send a wrong signal to the public, and would encourage others to do likewise.

Later, officials changed the name to the legality of the statue saying it was built on land owned by the city government.

After weeks of threatening to demolish the structure, however officials are now saying they are open to a compromise, probably putting a pair of pants on the statue, or underwear or the classic fig leaf.

Vice Mayor Luis Bonguyan said in jest he was disappointed by the statue's size, which is rather small, referring to the private parts that person would be swinging in public to curious faces.

Staring at the left statue from the shade where his carabao is parked, Romeo Salazar, a driver, said he could not see anything wrong with it.

"It just looks like my own body," he said, without a trace of malice on his face.

But Junid Radaloh, 26, a Mini-Trycle driver plying in the area, appeared offended.

"That's a very bad statue," he says, angrily shaking his head as his tricycle heads toward Times Beach Resort. "People are not supposed to place it there."

Teodoro Aduna, owner of the Queensland Investment Corp., said he commissioned the statue to make the people of Davao proud of the work of art that graced with three cities in the world.

Beside the statue is a sign saying that the full size replicas of Michelangelo's masterpiece in Florence, Italy can be found only in London's Victoria and Albert Museum; in Santa's Queensland, Brisbane area or a consequence of a shopping mall in Santa's Bachelor, and in Las Vegas' Caesar's Palace. Davao will be the fourth only to host it, it says.

Clarissa Lucero, PDI Mindanao Bureau

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Schoolchildren in Maloney, Negros Occidental display Philippine flags that they made using paper and crayons.

Engineer becomes latest kidnap victim of Pentagon gang

LIBUNGAN, NORTH COTABATO—Heavily armed men believed to be members of the Pentagon kidnap for ransom gang, stalked early yesterday a businessman from his farm in this region's Region four, local officials said.

Mayor Rosalio Pedro said the victim, engineer Darwin Amoral, was abducted at about 7:45 a.m.

Pedro said the kidnappers have not revealed any demand from the victim's family.

Both Gualberto Jose Emmanuel Dilod said the 60-year-old Amoral was driving his Nissan Pathfinder vehicle with license plate CBS 674 when flagged down by about ten gunmen.

The suspects then commandeered the victim's vehicle and fled toward nearby Midsayap town, about 10 kilometers away.

Police said the getaway vehicle was later sighted in Barangay Dalwinan in Buluan, Maguindanao province, about an hour's drive from here.

Amoral is a resident of Pasong, Tiongkuan town. He manages a rice mill in Barangay Bagumbayan.

Dilod said he already asked Chief Supt. Asiatico Bilkoren, chief of the Police Anti-Crime Emergency Response (Force for Southern Mindanao, to help track down the suspects and rescue the victim.

The Pentagon is a known ally of the Abu Sayyaf, and is also engaged in kidnapping for ransom activities in Central Mindanao and the Western Mindanao area.

The kidnap gang was to notoriety in the late 1990s when it abducted several Italian missionaries.

The group was also behind the abduction of four Chinese engineers and three Filipino guide from the government irrigation project in Carmen, North Cotabato.

In October, Rebel Macalumsim, one time arrested but was killed in a police operation in Cotabato after he escaped from jail.

Despite the series of military and police operations against the group in Central Mindanao, it continues to victimize mostly businessmen.

The Pentagon is still holding Filipino Chinese trader Benny Ang, who was seized in Cotabato City on Sept 8 this year.

Authorities claimed the suspects have been asking P10 million to release the family refuses to give in. *Edwin Fernandez, Mindanao Bureau*

DENR office finds Lafayette at fault for spill

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE DAMS THAT WERE SUPposed to contain the toxic tailings from the P1.4-billion Rapu-Rapu polymetallic Western in Albay were not yet sufficiently built to hold the mine waste and infiltrator at the time of the mine spills, the Environmental Management Bureau revealed yesterday.

DMB Region 5 director Gilbert Gonzales said the second mine spill in Rapu-Rapu on Oct. 31 was caused by Lafayette's failed attempt to contain the mine tailings and rain water that fell on the upper catchment tailings dam.

He said Lafayette was aware that its upper tailings dam could not hold the volume of tailings and water, so it opened a portion of the upper tailings dam to let the mine-run flow into the lower tailings pond and later to the surface pond that overflowed to the creek.

"It (containing the discharge) was beyond the immediate capability of Lafayette. It requires a system and it ... They underestimated the rain-offs ... They knew the situation, but they had limitations to put up (to be required measures)," he said.

Gonzales' observations contradicted the findings of environmental groups who conducted an independent fact-finding mission in Rapu-Rapu and alleged that the dams were not strong enough to hold the tailings.

The Center for Environmental Concerns said the workers deemed they were told to open the dam and redirect the discharge to the creeks, which goes out to the Pacific Ocean and Albay Gulf as earlier reported.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau had said the workers' claim was rather to protect the source dam was in pipeline system linking the tailings dams to the sea.

An EMB report on the Oct. 31 mine spill, however, negated the MGB's claim.

But no official of Lafayette is cited the mining operations would continue and that they are safe.

Rogelio Gopal, EPI acting general manager for operations, said so far no rehabilitation program was undertaken as the already outlined and identified three-tier dikes, medium and long-term.

He said the three was doing all it can to make its operations safe, especially since it is now using HDPE (high-density polyethylene) for the dikes. *With reports from Oliver Francis Arevalo, PDN Southern Luzon Bureau*

ROUNDUP

More positive news sought

CABANGCALAN—The Cabanatuan Green Hills Tourism and Development (MPCO) has appointed journalists and other sectors for more positive coverage of issues affecting the country locally. During a media dialogue session that the group sponsored here from Nov. 17-18, about ranked representatives mostly were relayed, while concerns being said the best to journalists' duty "the resolution of issues and concerns."

Baldomero Ortiz, PDI Zimbabwe Bureau

Play on peace set

ZAMBOANGA CITY—A dialogue-play contest, dubbed "Sigid: Piece of Tongue," will be staged here. It is an initiative of the Zamboanga Peninsula Police Office's Regional Community Affairs Development Unit (RCADU). Using this 5-day new in 1994 as setting, the play was inspired by the book "The Enemy of Will Is Who I Said," which was written by peace advocate Fr. Robert Layson, SJR. "The play is a new strategy to disseminate the 4-year-old Mindanao Peace Act," said Cecilia Ocampo of the Mindanao Peace Institute. All acts to be staged will be judged and 3 winning indigenous students will be officiated for the play, which is aimed to end of strengthening Muslim-Christian relations.

Baldomero Ortiz, PDI Zimbabwe Bureau

Tapping jatropha trees

BACOLOD CITY—The Philippine National Oil Co.-Green Energy Development Corp. (PNOC-EDC) has licensed a partnership with a farmers' cooperative and a civic-minded firm to create jatropha trees as a viable energy source. The PNOC-EDC on Wednesday signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Bioenergetics Producers Cooperative (Bio-Kooperative) and Bio-Oils Resources Inc. to develop the jatropha Plantation Project in Moloundan City. The project involves the propagation of jatropha trees, locally known as tuba, which has been identified as an excellent source of feedstock for bio-fuel. The 12 percent oil content of this jatropha seed is considered as a substitute for diesel fuel.

Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

Feeding program launched

CEBU CITY, Laguna—The Catholic Charity's "Pondo ng Pinoy" (PnP) project is launching a feeding program in various dioceses in Metro Manila and nine provinces for undernourished children, especially those with stunted growth, to starve. The San Pablo Diocese in Laguna is among the various dioceses to benefit from the feeding program for the 100 days. The diocese plans to feed 50 malnourished children, aged 0 to 5 years old, daily for five days and for a duration of six months.

Romulo Pasilo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Army warning drives Sulu folk to flee

COTABATO CITY—THE MILITARY'S warning about an imminent big attack in operations against the Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah has caused panic among residents, a ranking government official said in the last-minute Region 10 Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) trial.

In the development, 2,000 families were reported to have left Jolo, Sayyaf bandits cited as there in Maimbung town according to Maj. Gamal Hasandoy, public information officer of the military's Southern Command.

Hasandoy said the soldiers were in a memorandum to buy supplies when distributed by a group led by Abinder Pamal from Barangay Bilaan.

Social Welfare Secretary Ruby Dalisay of the ARMM said when the distribution of leaflets informing people of the impending full-scale operation, the number of evacuees can be in nearly 10,000.

"The English version of the leaflet was not alarming but the Tausug translation was when created panic among the villagers," she said.

Dalisay said that leaflets have pictures of military hardware and asked residents to stay inside their homes or hide during the military operations.

"Tension among residents of Jolo has already set in and in other side by them, where fighting gradually stopped except for few sporadic skirmishes in Indanan (town)," Dalisay said.

But Army soldiers Sabyanten and planes began raining bullets on Bulo, Sabtang and Tumahubong towns.

The military's Southern Command earlier said it was distributing the leaflets to warn residents against going out of their homes when the military operation resumes.

Armed Forces chief Gen. Generoso Senga in the statement said the operations after nearly a week of fighting in Indanan and Patikul towns that left four soldiers dead and more than a dozen others wounded.

Two civilians were also injured while the military estimated that about 100 Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), Jemaah Islamiyah members.

Sulu Gov. Benjamin Loong said the leaflets "was printed in Jolo but it was done without my knowledge." The national bid the contents. *Jeff Canare, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

VICTIM
A Ranger who was wounded when a landmine used by communist guerrillas killed nine of his colleagues is wheeled into the Western Visayas Medical Center.

Samar group plans to sue DENR chief

By Vincent S. Lubro
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—THE SAMAR Island Biodiversity Foundation Inc. (SIBF) has hired a lawyer to look into the possibility of filing a case in court against Environment Secretary Ramon Paje over his issuing an order that allowed the resumption of logging operations in Samar Island.

Fe Cesar Avelino, SIBF president, said their lawyer sent a letter to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) last Nov. 8, asking the agency to furnish their copies of all documents relative to Department's recent order that lifted the 30-year-old logging moratorium in Samar.

He said the filing of a case would depend on the decision of their Manila-based lawyer, Royal de Guzman, after going through the "entire documents" that would get from the DENR.

The SIBF is a consortium of non-government organizations and people's organizations that are involved in environment protection and conservation in Northern Samar, Eastern Samar and Western Samar.

Albay prepares for bird flu

LEGAZPI CITY—BE INFORMED and prepared. More than 100 of Albay's provincial officials, city and municipal mayors, agricultural technicians, livestock and local disaster coordinating officials were told that these were the best weapons against bird flu.

During the Avian Influenza Prevention Training Workshop on Wednesday, the local officials received crash course on the disease and were briefed about the preventive measures being undertaken by the provincial government.

"Limiting awareness among the local government units is important as these are the persons who can easily relay the information to the concerned," said Joel Bryan, 3rd assistant regional director for operations.

Bryan added that as part of preparedness, LGUs need to report carcasses as told the prevention is done by the municipalities of Bulan, Matnog and Pilar to Bicol Interagency and the province of Camarines Norte.

"We collaborate to find breeding in Camarines Sur," he said.

Interagency Bird Flu Task Force under the Department of Agriculture, the Albay workshop provided an overview of the Asian disease and presented measures on its prevention and eradication.

The national bird flu control committee set up to combat information campaign in Bicol and Barangay

Container van yields protected species

By Lolit B. Salamero

THE PHILIPPINE COAST GUARD (PCG) yesterday seized a stash of dried sea horses, a protected variety of small fish, from a container van with papers that said it was carrying a cargo of sea cucumbers.

The dried sea horses were found inside a 20-foot container van at Pier 10 that came from Cagayan de Oro and was supposed to be shipped to Vietnam. The owner of the shipment was identified as a certain Cielo Constantino.

Commander Leopoldo Laroya of the PCG said representatives from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) confirmed that the contents of the cash were sea horses.

Sea horses are covered by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), an international agreement between governments, to which the Philippines is a signatory.

The marine animals are included in Appendix II of the CITES, which lists species that are not necessarily threatened with extinction but whose trade must be controlled to protect their survival. Appendix I includes species threatened with extinction and whose trade is allowed only under special circumstances.

According to Laroya, the PCG placed the van under watch since Nov. 2 after receiving information that apart from sea cucumbers, it could contain other dried sea animals, some of which could be endangered. Sea cucumbers are not considered endangered and their trade is not regulated.

However, the PCG was not able to open the van immediately because the Bureau of Customs said it would first have to wait for the owner to appear. The owner never showed up.

On Friday last week, the BOC finally opened a number of suspicious-looking container vans. The van actually contained some 245 sacks, but PCG and BFAR officials were only able to check one sack yesterday because of the cramped location at Pier 10, Laroya said the PCG had requested the shipping company that brought the van to Pier 10 to transfer it to the PCG premises in Parañaque Compound so as to facilitate more spacious location so that its contents could be inspected properly. He said the PCG did not have forklifts and trucks to bring the van and its contents to another area for inspection.

The owner of the container van could also be held liable for misdeclaring its contents, Laroya added.

Seahorses are usually fished with carved corals, carved fish and fossils that resemble bone but are actually expected for their use in ornamental and purported medicinal value.

WILL it be a dismal Christmas for processing LP employees...or a jumpicious Pinoy Boxing Day will tell/NOEL CELIS

UP workers vow protest moves

By DJ Yap

DOZENS OF WORKERS AT THE UNIVERSITY of the Philippines shared a humble dinner of instant noodles and dried fish on Sunday to symbolize many hungry nights as they awaited the release of their long delayed cost-of-living allowance (COLA).

Members of the All-UP Workers Union and the All-UP Academic Employees Union staged a vigil at Quezon Hall in front of the Oblation statue to reiterate their three-year-old demand for their COLA, now estimated at almost P1 billion. They warned that their protest actions would resume on Nov. 24 to pressure the UP administration not to authorize the release of the COLA that them for needs realized between 1999 and 1999.

In the next few days, administrative personnel and representatives from other UP campuses will be coming in shifts to participate in the protest, said AUPAW president Cleda Aldo Cabrera. On Nov. 24, the protesters will attempt to mobilize all its forces from the entire UP system for a week stoppage, he warned.

Some 14 thousand UP employees are entitled to P60,000-P70,000 each in back pay, he said, but the UP administration had said it would wait for the Supreme Court to resolve the legality of the COLA release. Cabrera challenged the UP administration to exercise political will by releasing the COLA, citing the case of the Commission on Higher Education which had released the COLAs to employees.

Kidnap suspect dared to face music

By Elson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE MOTHER OF A 3-YEAR-OLD KIDnap victim is asking Sionito Wong, a co-accused of actor and former Quezon City Rep. Dennis Roldan to appear in court.

"She said earlier she would set up to court. But where is she now?" Singa Ya said in a phone interview.

Wong, Roldan and five others are accused of kidnapping Ya's son in February, demanding a P250 million ransom. The actor and four others are detained at the Pasig City Jail. Defendant Cynthia Gerero, a witness against Roldan, is at the Philippine National Police Custodial Center.

Wong, who was a friend of the victim's family, is at large.

Pasig City Regional Trial Court Judge Agnes Luspin issued an arrest warrant and a hold departure order against Wong in August.

A total of P550,000 reward was being offered for information on Wong.

Why AFP is losing to the NPA

ON TARGET

RANDY DAVID

THE GOVERNMENT SUFFERED another defeat at the hands of the communist New People's Army when guerrillas ambushed a military patrol, killing nine and wounding 20 others in Cebu.

At the rate soldiers are being killed by the NPAs, the armed forces of the Philippines might be decimated.

The rebels used land mines in the Cebu ambush, an act which the AFP condemned.

The AFP said the use of land mines is banned by the Geneva Convention.

Said the AFP: Only troops consisted of the guerrillas, including the NPAs, are not bound by the Geneva Convention.

So, instead of complaining, why doesn't the AFP give the guerrillas a dose of their own medicine?

If the AFP doesn't admit that the NPAs are winning the war, against them, ask Benito Ish who have had encounters with the guerrillas what kind of weapons they're using.

The NPA carry weapons that government soldiers carry. The No. 1 source of weapons of the NPA are government troops they killed in ambuscades.

A national security official told me that the military lose 600 rifles to the NPAs every year. The source for every 600 guerrillas killed, one government soldier is also killed.

There was a time when the military-communist guerrillas ratio was 30 guerrillas killed against one government soldier killed.

Why does the AFP suffer defeat after defeat at the hands of the NPAs?

The primary reason is poor intelligence. The military is not find the right information about the movements of the rebels or their hiding places.

Why? Because there is little budget for intelligence, and the little budget set aside from paying off informants is pocketed by the AFP big boys.

Another reason why the military is not winning the war against the communist rebels is the latter's overwhelming civilian support.

There is little or no government presence in areas where the local populace support or sympathize with the NPAs.

For example, when a farmer's relative is victim in a remote barangay he doesn't run to the police but to the NPA. The NPAs are quick in moving out their own brand of justice against robbers and other criminals that prey on locals.

Yet another reason for the NPA winning the war against government troops is that soldiers must be in vehicles and don't want to walk while on patrol.

NPA guerrillas are highly mobile because they walk in small groups, whereas government troops go out on patrol in platoons (30 to 40 men).

A small group moves fast and can go far without being detected. A big group, on the other hand, is slow and easily detected.

Why doesn't the AFP break up its divisions and brigades into battalions, combat teams (BCTs) that were very effective against the Moks during Magsaysay's time?

A BCT unit is a complete unit. It had tank, artillery and air support. It moved fast because it was compact. BCTs are very effective in guerrilla warfare.

CHR officials inspect slain suspects' car; autopsy requested

By Luige A. del Puerto

OFFICIALS OF THE COMMISSION ON Human Rights (CHR) inspected yesterday in Camp Crame the bullet-riddled car of three alleged carjackers as they investigated the killing of the suspects in Pasig City.

The officials also checked the car of police reportedly involved in the shootout with the suspects. CHR chair Purificacion Quisumbing led the team, accompanied by commissioners Wilfredo Sacbibit and Elgin Merida.

Members of the scene of the crime operation (SOCO) who analyzed the crime scene are expected to appear at the CHR hearings today, according to the commission's legal and investigation chair Nilda Pilapil.

Quisumbing said they wanted to know how many bullet entries were there and where the shots came from, and to match the information with accounts of how the alleged carjackers died.

"We are also running the final report of the SOCO, which has ballistic information," she added.

PNP Crime Laboratory head Chief Supt. Renante Beloso said bullet marks were found on the left side of the car, consistent with the officers' account of their position during the initial exchange of gunfire.

Quisumbing said the CHR was trying to get the permission of the family of Ferwin Mendoza, one of the three suspects, to examine his body. The bodies of the other suspects, Antoc De Guzman and Brian Anthony Dulay, were cremated. Quisumbing said the CHR wanted to have Mendoza's body autopsied anew.

Renante Ilda, the driver of one of two Mercedes Benz cars found in a subdivision in Quezon City, where the police conducted a five-hour operation last week, claimed the car owner-but-blamed Beroken told police that three robbers, one of whom he later identified as Dulay, took the car around 6 a.m. on Oct. 24 on Road 10 in the Bagong Silangan Center.

Supt. Eduardo Bayangos, chief of the Special Operations Groups of the Traffic Management Group, said the driver made the identification of Dulay at the funeral parlor where the slain suspects were brought. The SOCO also covered on Wednesday night the cars inside the Sinag Bato Subdivision in Barangay Commonwealth, Quezon City, and arrested two men, Patrick Tuzon and Maurice Valerian, who were trying to sell a Nissan Patrol belonging to ABS-CBN talent Iya Villania.

Rockwell security chief slain

By Tarra V. Quismundo

A SECURITY OFFICER OF ROCKWELL El Makati City was killed inside his office in Quezon yesterday.

Christian Lean was declared dead on arrival at the Asian Care Center of the city-run hospital on Makati.

The 35-year-old acting chief of security of the posh development project died of multiple crash wounds, the Makati Police Department (MPD) said.

MPD Homicide Section chief Senior Inspector Gerry Ilagan said they were establishing the motive for the killing, and would see if anyone in the security force had problems with the victim.

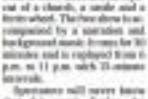
Layas's colleagues from the Southwest Investigative agency saw women hurriedly leaving the victim's office on Annapolis corner Buendia Extension Southwest Center around 1 a.m. yesterday.

Security guard Arnold Almocil said he and others were the security guards chased the man but lost him.

MPD Homicide also investigated another killing some four hours earlier, just a few blocks from Rockwell Center.

Nestoria Ortiz, 23, of Laperal Compound in Barangay Guadalupe Viejo, had a three-year-old in the north, said investigator SPO1 Lowelle G Bichini.

Long-playing Yule show finds home



"I thought that if something moved in a display window, pedestrians would be tempted to look. And when they do, they will have to look at our merchandise too," Rosario said.

The strategy worked. When the Rosarios opened their 7-floor store at the Atrium Center in 1986, they set a new trend in holiday decorations with figures of Cinderella dancing with her prince in front of a castle, on a display below the 2nd floor building. The characters, run by motors, were papier mâché figures, which had to be repainted after being soaked in the rain.

Four years later, Rosario and his team, including Alberto Aquino, now 67, started using mannequins made of fiber glass.

Starting to a snowbreeze as the back of the building, the next could themselves every year. The displays started to sell

a story, which the animated mannequins acted out, in front of life-sized backdrops.

The hardest they had done so far was called "Christmas Galleria" showing a standard operation depicting several floors with Santa Claus on their way to pay homage to the Infant Jesus. Another operating comprised Santa Claus.

"The sum of the displays became more and more expensive, but the company's willingness for the project enabled us to carry on," Rosario said. Before long, the mall at the edge of the Ayala Center became a popular destination even for visitors during Christmas.

The displays were so well-loved that scientists started sending cakes and cookies (and even letters from abroad) to the creative team.

Because of the tedious work

put on the project, Rosario starts contemplating the decorations while a display is still ongoing. Once approved, the idea is transferred into a sketch by an artist by January. The drawing becomes the basis for the materials purchase and the animation, executed as early as May. Rosario announces the background music and the script for the narration.

"A lot of companies and stores have tried to copy our animated displays, but they failed to sustain their projects," said a visibly proud Rosario. "I am proud to say that our team's loyalty to the company and to the display is very strong. This is what has kept our display 60-feet years," he added. "My children and grandkids can take over. It is a tradition worth continuing. My dream is for the displays to last another 60 years or more."

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METRO BRIEFS

Starting on wrong foot

POLICE arrested over the weekend [illegible] policemen who committed robbery last June in Tagaytay City. Police Maj. Gen. Nicolas Rapsing, Police Regional Director, identified the suspects as PSI Shannon Sumaya, 33, and PO3 Ronnie Ya-ona, 31. Ya-ona was recently arrested by the Tagaytay Police's Station 1 for being out with the Lucena Police District. Police said the latter could be behind robberies in [illegible] the Tagaytay City Police Station 1 [illegible] Sumaya, [illegible] Ya-ona [illegible] Sumaya [illegible] Ya-ona [illegible] Sumaya [illegible] Ya-ona [illegible] Sumaya

METRO
Editor Boots C. Dipasupil

Yule show finds home

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

A 40-YEAR-OLD GRAND SHOW which has delighted several generations of Christmas time has found a new home.

Standing in front of the Greenhills Shopping Center in San Juan town is an P8-million Christmas display that promises to awe spectators with its lavish mannequins and elaborate lights.

Alejandro Amarra, 81, and his creative team are behind the tradition, a back-breaking enterprise that began with pieces of cardboard and plywood from decades ago that had outlived into the famous COD Department store Christmas displays at the Ayuntia Center in Cubao, Quezon City.

"The displays meant sharing our only material things but the joys of Christmas with all kinds of people," Amarra told the reporter.

Pioneering pabo made Amarra decide to close down the once popular department store three years ago, choosing to end his yearly display that Greenhills management came to the rescue and gave it a new home in 2003. See many who followed the shows know of the transfer.

"We want our people to feel the true spirit of Christmas through the display especially now that we are already confronted with bad news," Greenhills manager Joey Santos, himself a fan of the COD Displays, time he was 7, said.

This year, the display is named "Christmas Carnival," boasting of over 30 animated mannequins in a story of a boy on his way to a church with his father who gave him in a car wreck setting.

The display which formally

CHRISTMAS wonderland at Greenhills Shopping Center with familiar COD display.

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SPORTS

Pinoys rap Indons in water polo

LOS BAÑOS—THE PHILIPPINES RELIED ON BROTHERS Ali, Frazier and Norton Alamara to down Indonesia, 15-10, yesterday and draw first blood in the water polo competition of the 23rd Southeast Asian Games at the Trace Aquatics Center here.

Normal after losing[1] legendary American heavyweight champions, the trio combined for five goals, most of them in the final period to secure the Filipinos' first win in the round-robin tournament.

Thailand, the 2003 SEAG silver medalist, beat Vietnam, 7-5, in the second game.

Alexander Edwin impressed with four goals, all of them in the first quarter, for the Filipinos, who are hoping to finally win their first ever gold in the sport.

"The team maintained a high level of aggressiveness and showed a lot of heart," said Philippine Amateur Swimming Association president Mark Joseph. "The Cruz will inspire them when they go up against Singapore tomorrow."

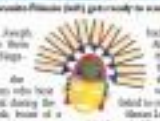
The Singaporeans, the reigning SEAG champions who beat the Filipinos for our gold during the Vietnam SEAG semifinals, front of a massive crowd and solid foreign opponents.

With a 9-9 lead at the end of the fourth period, Warren Alamara came through with two goals in the last three minutes as the nationals added their margin to 12-9, which the Indonesians failed to overhaul.

Ahmat Lesard, one of seven notes Phil Lionel of Lions time, also knocked in three goals to make things hard for the Warren-coached Indonesians, fourth players in the Vietnam SEAG in 2003.

Winner and Phoben Alamara finished with two goals each, while Ali, Danny Dela Torre, Shelwin Dela Paz, and Erik Evangelista scored one each.

The Philippines got off to a hot start when Edwin benDaniel two goals But the Indonesians quickly fought back through Lucky Dumapok and Rahmatsyah Jayagiri to tie the count, 2-2, at the 2:34 mark of the opening quarter. Mary Anthony Aguas



PROUD TO SERVE. Filipino-Britons Philip James Younghusband (left) and younger brother James Joseph.

Younghusbands and RP football make fine couple

By Cordell Tagaro
PDI Pampanga Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—BELIEVE IT or not, it took a video game to determine these two brothers, who might just provide the eyes to kick Philippine football badly needs to land a berth in the Southeast Asian Games.

Not young Filipino-British brothers Philip James and James Joseph Younghusband—who were discovered after their names were found on the rosters of English club Chelsea (nine-0-96 playstation game—do not seem to get bothered by the pressure at all.

"We have a preseason and I'm confident that everyone will be ready," said 20 year-old Philip James, a striker and the younger of the two brothers. "It's not only me and James, football is a team sport."

The Philippines' string of disappointing results in recent months has pushed the team low in 129th ranking in world football, Bandwidth Blasters (100) and Cock Islands (190).

But with the brothers' arrival and a slew of foreign-raised PH guests in the fold, there's reason behind the optimism of Philippine Football Federation president Mariano Fernandez.

"RP football has gotten stronger because of them," said Fernandez.

It's just a matter of time [illegible] he added, referring to the country's chances of becoming one of Asia's best—a leg the Philippines held in 1950s up to early or late 1970s.

Born 11 months apart, the Younghusbands are among the six PH foreigners who will spearhead the Filipino roster they take on defending champion Thailand in their first game in the Dream Eight Invitational.

Despite their youth, both Phil and James are no strangers to high-level competition. They both played for top-flight English club Chelsea's reserves since they were 10 and Philip even he's scored more than 100 goals for the squad.

In fact, before they left England two weeks ago, Philip, who stands 5-foot-11, scored four goals in the last seven games of Chelsea's division B team. The club even applied for a provisional six-month work permit for him in this case by giving him a place on the pro-soccer pyramid. Images source, giving him the rare opportunity to play with stars John Terry, Arjen Robben, Frank Lampard and Joe Cole.

The Younghusbands also hope to play in competitive ranks in the country both for nation-state [illegible]

Malaysians overpower Cambodian booters

By Cordell Tagaro
PDI Pampanga Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—A GUTTERAL ROAR OF [illegible] greeted shoulder-padded Malaysian as 6-0 Cheaters of Cambodia last night in eighth-round Group A match in the Southeast Asian Games on the Futsal pitch here.

LaFranque Amendien Rasak kicked off and completed the scoring for Malaysia, which played the last 40 minutes minus star striker Bader Bin Kamil, who was sent off for verbal abuse.

Rasak and Thirumurugan Vetcayi has hat trick a header from the far post on the eighth minute, and Faiz Azuar Bin Zubir made it 2-0 in the 40th, finishing off a dribbling run with a curling right-footed rocket from 25 yards out.

RP pugs glad to be fighting on home soil

By Christiaan Tee
PDI Pampanga Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—For seven members of the Philippine boxing team, representing the country in this year's Southeast Asian Games here is a "special homecoming."

"I'm feeling it all on the line to bring home the gold because I will be fighting in front of my province's mother," two-time Asian amateur champion Mildred Manzano, whose family will also be seeing her in action for the first time, said in Waray-Waray. AP-ACI

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BAP files contempt raps vs POC

By Ray Luces

THE BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION OF THE Philippines yesterday filed a petition for contempt against the Philippine Olympic Committee for ignoring an order by a Manila Regional Trial Court that the local Olympic body reinstate the cage body into waiver of members.

The civil case filed at the court's branch 53 by Christine Tan, BAP executive vice president, named respondents were POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, chairman Robert Aseneta and secretary general Jose Romero in a separate.

The same court had earlier issued a writ of preliminary mandatory injunction against the POC on Nov. 07, ordering the local Olympic body to "reinstate, reinstate and recognize" the BAP "with the same rights, privileges and status as was enjoyed by or accorded to said entity prior to the suspension and/or expulsion."

The POC regarded the BAP into June 30.

BAP president Jose Lina explained that a preliminary mandatory injunction, since it is issued and served on the respondent (POC), is extraordinarily executory.

"Unless a higher court overrules the lower court (RTC), then the respondent has no choice but to comply," he said.

Non-compliance is disobedience and therefore a contempt of the court, Lina added.

Lina said even if the POC files an appeal, it will not stop the RTC-order, unless a higher court issues a temporary restraining order.

The POC refused to comment on the latest legal action by the BAP.

In a press statement sent to the beaten concerning the POC said that involving the legal institution has transformed [illegible] football court into a legal question instead of a legitimate sports issue.

"Since the International Olympic Committee prohibits this type of intervention on the affairs of our Olympic family, the POC has [illegible] pursued [illegible] to

COJUANGCO

LINA

spend to all queries on POC's further action in response to the Manila Regional Trial Court order last June 30," the statement said.

POC spokesman Jose Romasanta, on the other hand, said, "That issue's over; it's the least of our worries. The biggest concern is right before us, the SEA Games."

The SEAG officially opens on Nov. 27.

Lina said the BAP was compelled to seek redress with the court because "time is running out [on the holding of basketball competitions in the 23rd SEAG."

"The likely non-staging of the cage competitions is causing a lot of disappointment among our basketball-playing countries," said Lina, stressing that there's still time to hold basketball if the POC so wants.

Reinstating the BAP means an automatic lifting of the [illegible] suspension of the Philippines which in turn clears the way for the staging of basketball in the SEAG.

Lina said the presidents of the Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia basketball associations and other members of the SEA Games Federation, have submitted the BAP-of their resolutions to come in unmarred's matter.

"They (SEAG countries) are ready to come if they're informed by their National Olympic Committees, which in turn will be notified by the POC," he said.

The POC had earlier informed the SEA Games Federation of its decision to stage basketball, but when the Philippines is the reigning men's titlist, since the BAP has been expelled from its roster.

The POC had earlier failed to convince the international basketball federation (FIBA) to lift the suspension it imposed on the Philippine team in the continuing rift between the BAP and the POC. — With additional's report from Minong R. Castillo

COOLER heads cry to cajole in their agitated transmission as keepers flare during the Malaysia-Cambodia match yesterday

'ANTI-FILIPINO'

CF official accused of giving away RP home-course edge

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE NATIONAL CYCLING TEAM may have lost its homecourt edge to rival Indonesia.

The Philippine Cycling Federation (PhilCycling) is up to arms over the actions of an official of the Cantao Triathlon Federation for allegedly helping the Indonesian aspirin beat the Tagaytay route of the 23rd Southeast Asian Games road races.

"That's anti-Filipino," said PhilCycling secretary general Mar Mendoza. "It seems it's part of our culture to be generous Asians, but in an event where route knowledge counts as a crucial factor, we were hoping that our national riders, who have been training really hard, would at least have an edge."

"It's really sad because our men are counting on our course knowledge to get an advantage.

The foreign delegations...led by Indonesian Cycling Federation executive general [illegible] Marten—managed to tour the Tagaytay route three weeks ago after the Indonesians reportedly ordered his driver to make the round-trip SEA Games road familiar with tourists.

But Rodriguez, the team manager of the Cantao Philippine Continental Team...a professional squad that races in this, said he received the blessings of PhilCycling and the Philippine SEAG Organizing Committee.

"The Indonesians requested for an initial inspection, but I verbally informed our officials," said Rodriguez, claiming ONE'let'ing Alvarez Rapalo Biron and Philbex head Peping Cojuangco as among those he informed. "I acted on behalf of these people."

PhilCycling, however, denied Rodriguez's claim and maintained that the official failed to endorse the Indonesian team to PhilCycling, which is the protocol in such events.

"The ONE'let'ing board will severally look at this and act on it since we conserve after the Games," said Mendoza.

Two years ago, in Vietnam, the country's national cyclists managed to see the route but organizers changed it days before the actual competition.

"They're making it a big issue," said Rodriguez. "Every member nation already received a copy of the time trial. And when's the time [when] we can get more work done and to look into the route. The Indonesians are also [an] issue behind."

"It doesn't mean I'm anti-Filipino," added Rodriguez. "The main purpose of the SEA Games is to promote friendship among nations."

The Cantao Filipino squad has been at odds with the PhilCycling in the past. PhilCycling claims the squad has misrepresented itself in the national team in several international meets.

Malaysians overpower Cambodians

From page A9

Malaysia, hoping to end a 36-year SEAG title drought, launched its first goal in injury time of the first half as Azuin Abu Hanafiah left-footed over for his first win despite being partially outplayed by Cambodian defender Om Thavrak.

With Cambodian prince Norodom Ranariddh disposing watching from the VIP box, the match took an ugly twist in the 22nd minute when Thavrak tackled Rahul Bin Ehsan, triggering a near free-for-all before referee U Win Oo of Myanmar stepped in to restore order. Thavrak and Ehsan were booked with a yellow card each.

The Malaysian booters sustained their assault as substitute Kamal and were responsible in the 60th minute when Jakarti's pepper rose was headed in by Sahid Bin Hanat. Rashidi's close-range strike, which easily beat keeper Goh Hie seven minutes from time, pegged the final score.

Malaysia notably made a critical switching-change just two months before the Games, re-electing Hungarian coach Bernhard Blasbers with Ismail Norimar Baba in the aftermath of its humiliating 7-0 loss at the hands of Thailand in the pre-SEA Games event in Bangkok.

Cambodia only had four polite opportunities to break through but could not connect with Malaysian keeper Yushil Ismar this tricky pocket-sized [illegible] and Gilbert Nes scored 3-of-4 from the free throw line as national shooting champion Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla's Cooking Oil Masters broke away from a 62-62 tie in the last two minutes to seal its sixth win in seven games in the tournament sponsored by Hang Yen, Tomas Cat's Chapman's, Olivo Lighting and Manila Sportswear.

With the win, Spring joined unbeatens King's Hardware in the semis and gained a better tie-breaker advantage.

"The boys were determined to win," said coach Elbin "Sing" Lantin and Spring scrambled The Metro "We're happy to be in the semifinals."

Former Ateneo shooting Ryan Bernardo scored the winning basket as MultiMore-Burlington nipped "JCJR" Lyceum, 86-86, in overtime in the other game.

Youngbusbands and RP . . .

Previous page A9

"It's an honor to don the Philippine jersey," the Southeast Asian marathon Eunice Pineda, sent their British father, Philip Arnow'th., during a holiday visit in Manila 20 years, said.

"The team's spirits are very high," said Jamie, who, like his brother Konrad football through the pedaling of their father at the tender age of five. "Nic [my sister] and [Neil] are bonding well with our teammates off the pitch."

Phil and Ice still be joining RP's awards: "I can help with my comparison on the ball which is

GOLDEN HOPE: Mary Anntoinette Rivero

Olympians head strong Filipino jins

THE PERSON PHILIPPINE TAEKWONDO TEAM is determined to surpass its showing in Kuwait two years ago when it won five medals at the 23rd Southeast Asian Games.

Athens Olympians Donald David Geisler (lightweight), Tshoolen Ito (bantam) and Mary Antoinette Rivero (light) hamper the well-rounded squad for the competition set Nov. 28 to 30 at the Cuneta Astrodome. Other members of the team formed by the Philippine Taekwondo Association headed by Robert N. Iwamoto[illegible]

Other stars that [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

KOBE Bryant (center) roars for a layup—just two of the 45 points that went for naught. AP/AFP

Bulls spoil hot night of Kobe

LOS ANGELES—CHICAGO 95 SCORED 13 of his 21 points in the fourth quarter, and Chicago beat the Lakers despite 42 points by Kobe Bryant, matching an NBA single-game high this season.

Michael Finley added 20 points and 12 rebounds for the Bulls in their first victory after three losses on their annual Western swing while the circus is at the United Center. Chicago is 2-91 on the yearly trip that began in 1990.

Bryant, who shot 17 of 34, didn't score in the fourth quarter as the Lakers lost their fifth straight. Shaquille O'Neal added 20 points and 11 rebounds.

In Toronto, the Raptors won for the first time in 14 games this season, beating the Miami Heat, 107-91, as Jason Kidnicia on the Nets's only wireless team.

Chris Bosh had a career-high 27 points and 12 rebounds, and Mike James added 25 points for Toronto. The 6-9 starter—the rookie start in the Raptors' 12-year history—was Toronto's longest losing streak since a 12-game skid Dec. 16, 2002-Jan. 14, 2003.

Dwayne Wade had 35 points, nine assists and eight rebounds for the Heat.

In New York, Stephon Marbury scored a season-high 37 points to help New York to a 103-92 beating of Portland and give coach Larry Brown his first Knicks victory as Hawkins's season's earlier.

Channing Frye added 20 points and Jamaal Crawford had 19 for New York. Sebastian Telfair (Marbury's cousin, back) is out with a sprained left ankle.

Al Harrington had 20 points for Portland.

In Los Angeles, Elton Brand had 22 points and 14 rebounds to help the Pacific Division-leading Clippers improve to 9-2, the best start in franchise history, on a 113-102 shellacking of the Golden State Warriors.

The Clippers are tied with defending champion San Antonio for the best record in the Western Conference.

In Indianapolis, Ron Artest scored 24 points to lead the Pacers to an 88-78 victory over the Houston Rockets.

Stephen Jackson added 17 points and Jermaine O'Neal had 13 points and 11 rebounds.

In Denver, Marcus Camby had 21 points and 13 rebounds in 34 minutes in the Nuggets' 119-straight victory in Mike Conley under coach George Karl and 100th consecutive home win over the Memphis Grizzlies, 99-92.

Francisco Garcia's defensive came off the bullpen glass.

Carolina Hollister added 22 points and 14 rebounds in 36 minutes, and Earl Boykins had 18 points for Denver (8-5), which moved over .500 for the first time this season.

In Seattle, Ray Allen scored 21 of his 28 points in the second half to lead the Sonics to their third straight win, a light 108-104 victory over the Sacramento Kings.

AP

NBA ON SOLAR: The San Antonio Spurs got to free Tim Duncan's playoff set as they visit the Sacramento Kings today. Tipoff is at 10:30 a.m. (Philippine time). Solar Sports will air the action at 9 p.m. Refereeing 11 a.m.

Annika collects trophy No. 10

PORT PALM BEACH, Florida—Annika Sorenstam closed another spectacular year with her 10th victory Sunday, holding off a spirited charge from Lorena Ochoa to win the Ginn sur Mer Classic on the 36th hole to give her the coalition she needed at the ADT Championship.

She finished with two solid pars for a 3-under 69 and a two-stroke victory over Sorenstam, who threatened from off the green with a 30-foot birdie while trying for birdie to force a playoff. Sorenstam shot 70.

Jennifer Rosales of the Philippines shot a final-day 73 for a 293 total that put her in a four-way tie for 15th spot.

Her $19,600 paycheck lifted her total for the rookie to $134,279, good—26th in the LPGA money list.

Sorenstam's winning earnings for the season reached a till and tied her record. Both had set outside chance of winning until neither made birdie save the final two holes and Sorenstam failed to make a tapmake.

"She's hard to catch," Sorenstam said. "You just know she won't make too many mistakes, and you know you have to make birdies."

Sorenstam became the first player to successfully defend her title in the American women's tour's session of the U.S. PGA Tour Championship, and now has won the event four times.

She finished at 6-under 282 and earned $225,000, taking her season's total to more than $2.5 million. She also captured her sixth Vare Trophy for the lowest scoring average, finishing at 70.35, the fourth time in LPGA history that it was the second time Sorenstam has won or been 10 times in nine LPGA seasons.

Sorenstam won 10 percent of her LPGA events this year.—10 of 21 AP

LPGA'S Ochoa

RP boxers glad to be fighting on home soil

By Jaime Laya
Inquirer Central Luzon

Nognos Dandakmal, mainly concerned in the the limited of amateur boxing in the country, is well-represented in the SEA Games by its finals... Jean Tipon, veterans Reynaldo Galido and Juanito Magbiguer, young blurk Jason Mediguen, Joegir Lachos and Phillies Bacorsas.

All will be competing in an international event for the first time here.

"It's every special when we fight here. We have the real homecourt advantage," the 30-year-old Galido, who came on preseminar after winning a gold in the 1994 Hiroshima Asiad, said.

Negrense boxers have actually announced for the last three Olympic models for the Philippines with Leopoldo Bernardino taking the bronze in the 1986 Seoul Games, a feat duplicated by Roel Velasco in Barcelona in 1992, four years before Olympian Mansueto "Onyok" Velasco entered the silver this chose like gold in Atlanta.

Leviste books World Cup slot

COMPANY TYRE AVIATE BOOKED a ticket to the World Cup Bowling playoff until accomplishes victory in the Manila leg of the prestigious equestrian tournament held over the weekend at the Alabang Golf and Country Club.

Atty. Globe Platinum Makiali, Leviste scored a follow-up show round to defeat Hong Kong's Charlene Mona in a thrilling jump-off.

With the victory, Leviste secured the right to represent Southeast Asia in the World Cup meet next May. Meanwhile, several rookie of her interne to bag a gold medal in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games (SEA) which the Philippines is hosting.

Of the riders who competed, only Leviste and Mona rode clear rounds in the first round to set the stage for a timed showdown over a shortened course.

Going first in the jump-off, Leviste put remembers pressure on Mona when she rode a clear round with a time of 54.41 seconds.

LEVISTE: Victorious

Nalbandian fishes rare triumph

SHANGHAI, CHINA—DAVID NALBANDIAN didn't stand flying under the radar at the Masters Cup until he outs both feet two and drove to upset Roger Federer in the final.

The 23-year-old Argentine didn't qualify automatically for the season-ending event. Ranked 12th, Nalbandian was drafted into the eight-man draw after Gaston Gaudio, Andy Roddick pulled out due to an injured back.

He had to cancel a planned flying trip to Israel to Shanghai, where Red dirt ace and other leading players who withdrew either before or right at the start of the tournament.

Nalbandian, who celebrated his 6 mil lion birthday and improved his year-end ranking to a career high No. 6, used the element of his 6-7 (4), 7-7 (11), 6-2, 6-1, 7-6 (3) triumph made it his greatest.

After losing the first two sets, he won 16 of 19 games and led, 4-0, in the last set before Federer drew even on a defending thump, mounted a comeback and was serving for the match at 6-5, 30-0.

"What's more important is the way that I won," he said. "It's really incredible, those kind of matches in the finals against the No. 1 of the world.

He didn't lose his serve once during the year. So it's really impressive."

Nalbandian was a longshot to win against top-ranked Federer.

It was a uncle after he'd lost to the Swiss star in the opening round-robin match here and all 10 losses after he had routed another Argentine, Gaston Gaudio, 6-0, 6-0, in the semifinals. AP

NALBANDIAN: Incredible match

SPORTSWATCH

World boop tilt safety assured

SECURITY and safety measures are now in place for delegates and participants in the 21st Chinese World National Basketball Tournament who started arriving yesterday for the four-day competition that opens on Nov. 29. For the Hong Kongese Stephen Hsiung Kwan Leung, arriving from 11 years ago and 30 times all over the world will be initiated to different hotels over the playing venues. Some 16 events spokesmen and coordinator said they are closely working and coordinating with authorities to assure the safety of the delegates as they can today. Their side is the Philippines. He said funding for the tournament from the Chinaregion Basketball Federation in Taiwan and is names headed by Chan Lone, the alumni Association headed by George Ty and school presidents Jose Ty Dee who stepped in their efforts and financial assistance to ensure the success of the tournament. Leonido Chua, president of the Chiang Kai Shek College Concerns Athletic Association, acknowledged the support beforehand. Other organizations such as the Bayan Transit of Tourism, Soul Bowers of the Dona Trading that donated Barbies, five official playing balls; Don Emilio Yap of the Manila Bulletin and Manila Hotel.

336 cockers enter Bakbakan semis

FROM a record field of 9368 entries, only 336 survived the qualifying rounds of the 2006 National Bakbakan 9-stag derby being staged at the Araneta Coliseum by the National Federation of Gamefowl Breeders and main sponsors Ginebra Matador and Bakbog. The semifinal round continues at noon today. The only competitors with no wins each are Tony Fernando of Batangas, Hermie Pua and Magic Cruz of Pampanga, Jaime Bautista of Tarlac, Bobo Pineda of Zambales and Obet Soto and Willie Villarica of Bataan. The remaining qualifiers will battle it out on Sun. 24. Championship rounds are scheduled on Nov. 26 and 28. For inquiries, call 911-7925 and 911-2401.

Provincial bets join SJC derby

FIFTY cadets and trainees from different provinces comprised the early batch of surfboards who registered for the 4. Cecil Cayetano Derby of San Juan Coliseum on Dec. 11. To join 11. To be hosted by the Barbas and SJC management, the derby stakes P1 million plus an owner-type jeep for the fastest win champion. Entry fee is P5,000. Registration includes Yacht Pilot, Pilot Cruise Ship, Pilot Pinatilo, Pilot Mikaela, Wing Vanquez, John Gabe, ABBP Zoilus, Yacht Pilot Francis Robert, Vince Perez, Andrew Dante Zamir Gutierrez and Gigo Palma. Reservation of air-conditioned mobile home is now ongoing. For inquiries, please call 8301-2929/30, 1726881, 1726882 and 727-1298.

Indio season opener Nov. 25

AMOTS Indio Coliseum and Thunderbird Winery Inside welcome the 2005-2006 season opener with a bang on previous Civil Comedian and contract manager Luis Tirona singer Jun Gallo Season Opener To Grand Derby Tournament by Thunderbird Producers A Classic GP the event is on Nov. 25 and 27 with a guaranteed cash prize of P500,000. Weight limits are from 1.0-2.4 kg. Contact Indio Coliseum at (02) 3091209 or 3091240 for details. Meanwhile, all systems are go for the 3-day Derby at the New Clover Ribbon Coliseo on the 29th. It is sponsored by Thunderbird Shabu Shag Bondoc and Cebu Pacific Air. Registration is at the Ribbon Coliseo in Concepcion City on Nov. 28. Inquiries by Rudy Ducusin and Bambino Tiamzon.

Bobong's 'Dream Game'

DESPITE THE HURT LA BELLE MEDDESOMA brought on by the player ineligibility issue that choked the UAAP a while back, interest in the "D-Day in December at the Dome" hasn't waned one bit. I myself have been bombarded with requests to produce that pawn-shop ticket for the stub waiting on awards the show. My I hope I won't disappoint.

Bobong Velez, he of the stately mustache and sobour integrity is beyond reproach, many the fact seems to connect another smashing success in the never-ending devoted rivalry between dentist and De La Salle.

"There is always a huge motivation for both schools to win whenever they meet," said Bobong. "Science feel in La Salle (before the UAAP this season and is leading for payback. On the other hand, La Salle would like to erase any doubt of its mastery over its rival school. We expect a sea of green and blue to flood the Araneta Coliseum on February. Whose show two season play against each other will have a lot to prove."

The event catches 8 of the Araneta Coliseum features two games, courtesy of Araneta High '81, La Salle High '81, the Philippine Basketball Association and PBA Sports.

Bobong, the STH chief who is an alumnus both of La Salle and Ateneo, is going the event as his contribution spotlighted in sports promotions. As Dream Games Project Director, Bobong believes since more the organizer, the better. Last year's event, the Dream Game '97, Four years later, Bobong organized another Araneta La Salle extravaganza, before proceeding—with much success—to produce the PBA on TV for over 10 years, from 1982 to 2000.

"It is time once more to resurrect the Dream Game 10 years after its first inception," said Bobong, who began the mechanics by this week.

A new and exciting twist is added this year in that the main game of the twinbill features PBA stars from both schools competing up with present day varsity players.

Ateneo's pros are Bido Moreno, Paolo Bugia, Larry Rosario, Wesley Gonzales, Olsen Racela, Pete Villanueva, Yeng Guiao and Joe Chio while present day collegiate stars are LA. Tenorio, Jiji Reyes, Jayjay Helterbrand and Jhaymee Mamon coach is Chot Reyes.

La Salle's pros are Jun Limpot, Mark Telan, Dan Alfaro, Mike Cortez, Mac Cuan, Ben-Hur Reynoso, Mark Catchuso and Willie Wilson while the current varsity stars are Joseph Yeo, Kiko Mauricio, Jun-Jun Cortes and Noel Arana. La Salle coach is Yong Garcia.

Both sides are serious in winning and, as proof, coach Boyet even scheduled a pre-game fist his hours on All Saints' Day.

The preliminary game is a Legends showdown between Ateneo and La Salle former Olympian Felix Flores and La Salle by Virgil Villavicencio. The teams will be made up of seven players from the '80s, seven from the '70s and seven from the '90s.

Among the Ateneo Legends are Chito Alcaide, Jay Cargurio, Tito Pastilan, Tiger Barrios, Sonny Chiongson, Eric Reyes, Dante Francisco and Jojo Lastimosa. The La Salle Legends include Lim Eng Beng, Alex Mumpar, Alex Perez, Gabby Velasco, Franz and Benito Pumaren, Dwight Lago and Emilio Yuvet.

PBA Commissioner Noli Eala, who attended La Salle Greenhills High School and thrown for his undergraduate and law studies, is fully supporting the much talked-about doubleheader.

Bobong said tickets are still for sale at NBA Sports, tels. 687-0644 and 895-3725.

"You must unscribed Sat. this is it.

Espiritu, Solis top PBA championships

JERRY ESPIRITU OF ALABANG and Bonnie Solis of Makati both handled titles from the Sta. Lucia East to capture the Ladies Masters and Graded Masters titles, respectively, in the 5th Pasig Bowling Association (PBA) Team Bowling Championships on Saturday at the Crown Valley Country Club team in Pasig City.

Espiritu, of AFBA, rolled 2289 to beat ILETSA Southeast's Lara Dracko 2065 for the ladies crown.

TIMBA Prima's Solis, on the other hand, rolled 3213 to pocket the elite trophy against Boy Calalay of GUITRA TMC who scored 31.29.

Jhe Balanay of AFBA was third in the Ladies Masters with 2933 followed by Nena Ibarrola of Bonifacio Water 2903, Lynn Sian of TUBA (2877), Helen Rory Villena (2838), PBA's Rita Bobbo (2836), Alice Calimoso of AMRA (2816), PBA's Jeanne San Diego (2810) and Rita Valenzuela of AMRA (2800).

In the Graded Masters final, shocking in third is Lito Santiniado of SUITBA-Fil Estate (3008) followed by Nino Valdezuela of PBA (2991), Lynn Sian of TUBA (2977), Helen Rory Villena (2938), PBA's Rita Bobbo (2936), Alice Calimoso of AMRA (2916), PBA's Jeanne San Diego (2910) and Rita Valenzuela of AMRA (2900).

In the Graded Masters final, shocking in third is Lito Santiniado of SUITBA-Fil Estate (3008) followed by Nino Valdezuela of TMBA Prima (3006), Ted Bobbo of PBA (3014), Toby Bernardo of SUITBA (2998), Jimmy Espiritu of TMBA (2981), PBA's Jimmy Tan, Jun (2960) and Mike Bobbo (2958) and Lito Jesus of LCTBA (2890).

The event was sponsored by Filipinas Shell Petroleum Corp., Union Bank, Marsman's Bus. Dr. Elmer Dumaine, Hungry Hippo and Hotel Bobbo of ITTBA.

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BUSINESS

Editor Raul D. Pangalangan
Assistant Editor Carrie S. Nocheseda

Treasury bill rates continue to slide

91-day yield eases to 5.221%

By Michelle V. Remo

TREASURY BILL RATES dropped across all maturities for the third straight weekly auction yesterday as banks scrambled for government securities following the release of a better-than-expected budget deficit for October.

National Treasurer Omar C. Ong said the decline in the government's short-term borrowing costs was due to the improving fiscal climate.

The 'rollover' 91-day treasury bill rate, used as a benchmark by banks in pricing loans, slid to only 5.221 percent, or 20.7 basis points lower than last week's 5.43 percent. Bids for the three-month government securities amounted to P8.1 billion, much higher than the government's auction offering of only P1 billion.

The 182-day bills fetched a rate of 7.53 percent, or 16.1 basis points lower than the previous week's. Tenders reached P13.46 billion, or almost nine times higher than the government's offering of P1.5 billion.

The rate for the 364-day bills declined to 8.094 percent, or 22.4 points lower than the week-ago rate. Tenders reached P18.74 billion, more than five times higher than the P3 billion on offer. (One percentage point is equivalent to 100 basis points.)

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GERMAN BANK WINS BIDDING

Metrobank sells ₱6.8B worth of NPLs

By Doris C. Dumlao

METROPOLITAN BANK AND TRUST Co., the country's biggest bank, has sold P6.8 billion worth of bad loans to German lender Hypo real Vereins Bank AG.

This was the second portion of several assets held by Metrobank that was bringing in almost P9.6 billion for non-performing loans unloaded by the bank this 2005.

"We are very pleased with the deal as it goes well with our objective of reducing our NPL portfolio and increasing the bank's profitability," said Metrobank president Antonio Alberto Jr.

"The bank has adopted a deliberate and programmed strategy in disposing of its NPLs. This P6.8 billion, following closely on the heels of its initial deals of almost P3 billion, highlights and underscores the effectiveness and viability of the program the bank has embarked on," he explained.

As of end-September, Metrobank reported that its NPLs stood at P30.45 billion, or 11.13 percent of its total loan portfolio.

The bank adds following a bidding held on Nov. 17 increased the bank's NPL level to P23.65 billion.

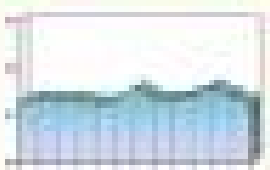
The bidding generated more than foreign financial institutions. The winning bidder was the Singapore unit of RVB, the second biggest bank in Germany and one of the 10 largest in Central and Eastern Europe. RVB, which specializes in retail and mid-cap corporate businesses, has 3,000 branches within and outside of Germany and employs more than 50,000.

While there initial successes, Metrobank looks forward to continuously trimming down its NPLs next year to low single-digit levels, Alberto said.

The bank plans to replicate these positive results in NPL disposition with those foreign institutions in its foreclosed assets disposition, Alberto said the bank would not only continue to aggressively pursue its traditional asset disposition outlets of direct retail sales, wholesale selling through accounts and joint venture agreements.

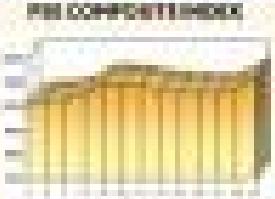
(SEE PAGE B2)

CURRENCIES



STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



Shares jump to 8-mo high

STOCKS GOT AN EARLY Merry Christmas gift yesterday, lifted by a stream of upbeat third-quarter earnings results and a rosier fiscal outlook for the government.

The benchmark 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange index rose 40.38 points, or 2.3 percent, to 2,130.26, its best finish since March 11, when it ended at 2,137.26. (See the Inventory for)

PCGG seeks new nominees for UCPB, CIIF boards

By Christine A. Saplala

THE SEARCH OF COMMISSION ON GOOD GOVERNANCE (PCGG) for nominees for the allowed government seats and, though it has yet to be formally declared, there is an impending vacancy and we may be the first to go," said Jose Ma. Panganiban, executive director of the Corporate Inclusive Recovery Movement Inc. and a board director of PCPB.

Other board directors that may be replaced include Fundmaster Holdings Inc. Miguel Magsaysay chair Mr. John and Philippine Business Conference executive director Rufino Pantaleon—all staunch advocates for the return of the estimated P15-billion coco levy assets to the farmers.

Oliver Villarosa, president of the Fundmaster Holdings Inc. Miguel Magsaysay Mapua Magsaysay of Magsaysay Inc. (MAMIN), also confirmed that the PCGG had asked their group to submit two nominees to the UCPB and CIIF boards.

"We have been asked to submit names and, personally, I was asked to be a board director, but I have not yet done," Villarosa told the business.

Villarosa's group has been closely linked with the group of Archbishop Emeritus Oscar Cruz, which recently held a regional consultation with concerned farmers pushing for an amicable settlement and dismissal of all cases in the coco levy scam pending with the Sandiganbayan and Supreme Court.

In December 2005, the Supreme Court issued a decision declaring the coco levy fund as prima facie public funds.

But there are still pending criminal cases against businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, among those he charged with the use of the coco levy fund to acquire big stakes in different companies, particularly San Miguel Corp.

Also, the Sandiganbayan has yet to decide on a number of civil cases involving the 16 percent stake in United Coconut Planters Bank—where Danding holds the coco levy were reportedly used—aside from the reported 26-percent equity in UBC.

AIM Asian Center for Entrepreneurship

Forest for the tree

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Bautista III

IT LOOKS LIKE THEN CLTE BENGUET Administration of Gloriastela may have to deal with a second administration.

It's not as if it has not enough of that already. The Palace, and the police of course, are still trying to hush the unruly mob bidding protest rallies, using its new crowd control invention called CPR.

Now Gloriastela must face the ire of the poverty-stricken people of Isamar, pinche Cachedo should direct, not to mention the politically active NGOs.

I mean, what a year for Gloriastela! Those people are not taking the Isamar political debt payback move of this cute administration just sitting down. Let's just say I smell trouble.

* * *

UNDER this cute opposing administration of Gloriastela, all of a sudden, the DENR is allowing a company to do big-time commercial logging on the island of Isamar.

This company is the San Jose Timber Corp., supposedly owned by Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, or JPE for short.

Remember:

During the time of Tita Cory back in 1989, our government suspended logging and created a 100,000-hectare forest preserve on the island.

A succession of secretaries at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources over the past 16 years did not dare lift the logging suspension.

In a brusque display of chutzpah-mas, the gab success head of the DENR, Michael Defensor, recently lifted the suspension, just like that!

Not only that, under Defensor, the DENR also decided to make it up to JPE's firm: the DENR amended San Jose Timber's logging permit, technically known as FLA or "timber" licensing agreement, by 16 years.

The FLA of San Jose Timber covers about 96,000 hectares! The DENR gave the company the right to cut trees in the huge area.

For the information of the gobmasa at the DENR, that area is roughly one and half times the size of Metro Manila!

How a single corporation is allowed to acquire the RIGHT over such a huge area of trees—which have been there even before gab became a craze, and trees made way for love—is beyond the impoverished people of Isamar to understand.

* * *

SAN JOSE Timber acquired the "timber-licensing agreement," enumerated by the DENR recently after 16 years of suspension, back in 1982.

Guess what? That was still the time of martial rule. Cinnie who was one of the most powerful figures in the Marcos regime?

The DENR suspended logging in Isamar in 1989, which was followed by the creation of the Isamar Island Nature Park.

But San Jose Timber asked the DENR to lift the suspension not just once, but three times.

Why can't the DENR cancel the existing FLA of San Jose Timber? Prior rights, my foot!

But there are still pending criminal cases against businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, among those he charged with the use of the coco levy fund to acquire big stakes in different companies, particularly San Miguel Corp.

Also, the Sandiganbayan has yet to decide on a number of civil cases involving the 16 percent stake in United Coconut Planters Bank—where Danding holds the coco levy were reportedly used—aside from the reported 26-percent equity in UBC.

AIM Asian Center for Entrepreneurship

Multimedia firm applies for nationwide franchise

By Clarissa S. Batino

MULTI MEDIA TELEPHONY INC. (3M) asked the National Telecommunications Commission for a nationwide permit to operate its broadband fixed line, public pay phones and public calling stations.

The company, which is now linked to businessman Enrique Razon, has a 25-year nationwide franchise for commercial telecommunications and television broadcasting operations since June 1998.

It has operated in the operations of a broadband network—a high-speed Internet service commonly used for the Internet.

Multi Media Telephony recently secured the NTC's approval to operate a limited wireless service using the code available frequency for cellular mobile operations.

It is one of nine companies that had applied with the NTC for a frequency to operate the third generation wireless phone service or 3G. The NTC will award 3G frequencies by the end of the year or early 2007.

Multi Media Telephony said in its statement to the Securities and Exchange Commission that it has yet to decide whether it will offer 3G services.

The Commission recently gave Multi Media a provisional authority to operate a Cellular Mobile Telephone System, or CMTS, on the condition that it would only operate a network of the 1900 band to provide mobile services linked to data and Internet operations.

The company said it was financially and technically capable of rolling out the said services nationwide.

It said the planned expansion was in line with the government's program to develop a "viable, efficient, reliable and universal telecom infrastructure using the best available and affordable technologies."

Multi Media said it would prioritize areas with scarce telco resources.

In Mandaluyong's website, the company listed Transpacific Broadband Group International Inc. and Broadband Phils. as among its partners.

Transpacific Broadcast is the technology affiliate of ATSI Holdings Inc., while Broadband said it had formed a strategic partnership with Caribbean Associates International. Other investors in Broadband Phils. are Edward S. Ruiz Group, Angelo, Gordon & Co., LE Investment and Stati Equity Partners.

BUSINESS

NSC creditors to lift default declaration

Troubled steel mill able to settle overdue bank debts

By Dara C. Dumlao

THE CREDITOR BANKS OF National Steel Corp. are expected to lift their default declaration against the steel mill's Indian owners very soon after part due payment obligations were settled.

Industry sources yesterday said NSC was able to make the payment of P250 million due last October and, on top of that, had received a P500-million letter of credit to cover future payments.

"The technical default declaration has been noted," the source said.

In a separate interview, Philippine National Bank president Irene Mier said PNB's board had approved the lifting of the default call.

PNB is the biggest creditor of NSC, but Mier said approximately 90% other creditors would still be needed to formally lift the default call.

A lifting of default declaration means that the NSC will not be subjected to foreclosure proceedings, whose secured creditors may get to sell the NSC assets.

The Digos-based steel plant is now being operated by Global Steelworks International Inc., which is part of the Ispat group of India.

The creditors earlier struck a landmark asset sale deal with Ispat to avoid the hassles allowed by the special purpose vehicle law. It was among the single biggest M&A deal in the Philippines since the M&A law was passed in 2002.

But halting soon took a toll on the banking system's total exposure to NSC originally stood at about P11 billion.

There were a total of 11 parties represented in the selling consortium, composed of 23 local banks, one foreign bank, one trustee on behalf of long-term commercial paper holders, an investment house and two government agencies.

After the signing of an asset purchase agreement, another clearing agreement was inked by the Indian group to secured creditors. The deal would guarantee that the remaining P2.25 billion indebtedness shall be repaid on installment basis for eight years.

PNB's trust banking group was likewise appointed as facility agent and collateral custodian for the side of NSC aside from documenting the mortgage trust indenture of the Digos-based steel plant.

NSC shut down operations in 1999 due to debt problems worth over P30 billion.

The ailment-ridden steel plant was resuscitated by the Indian group after it was approached by the latter's client steel importer, which wanted NSC's products for its operations.

Lack of funds sets back central Mindanao dev't

By Michelle V. Rosas

COTABATO CITY—BIFRAS (Cotabato development plan) for this city says the medium term may not be achieved because of the national government's perceived failure to deliver the approved funds.

The plans were supposed to boost sluggish economic activity in this self-governing area.

The local office of the Department of Public Works and Highways has ruled out 15 programmed national road projects slated for 2005 as not accomplished due to budget constraints.

Consequently, the target of paving 75 percent of national roads in the region by 2010 may not be realized, said the BIFRAS. Only 56 percent of the 1,395-kilometer national road network in Region 12 had been paved.

Region 12 is composed of the provinces of South Cotabato, North Cotabato, Sarangani and Sultan Kudarat, and the cities of Cotabato, Koronadal, Tacurong, Kidapawan and General Santos.

David Padlan, officer in charge of the DPWH's central Mindanao office, told reporters that there were 14 national road projects covering a total of 15 kilometers, originally set for 2005 and programmed under the Medium Term Philippine Investment Plan 2005-2010.

Padlan said P130 million was needed to implement the projects. The national government only dedicated P56 million.

"The amount was only enough to fund completion of some bridges and engineering details," he said.

The amount was not even enough to complete a single kilometer out of the planned 15-kilometer road network, Padlan added.

He also said Region 12 was having a difficult time getting official development assistance (ODA) from foreign agencies. He said the agencies doubted that infrastructure projects in areas of conflict could be completed.

Padlan admitted that there were instances in the past where ongoing infrastructure projects were delayed because of clashes between the military and bandits.

"This place will remain underdeveloped if the bandit-related incidents are not addressed. Projects will not be given," Padlan said in an interview. He added that the national government could do ours to implement the drive to 4,000 kilometers concreted under the MTPIP.

The projects that were supposed to be implemented in 2005 under the MTPIP were the Matuan Lake Sebu Road, Cotabato-Davao road, Cotabato City-Carmen-Kabacan road, Matuan-Polomolok road, Cotabato City-Awang-Dalican Road, Glan-Jose Abad Santos road, construction of the new 4-lane Quirino bridge, and the General Santos City-Isulan section motor pike.

Mayor Datu Muslimin G. Sema of this city said that the Cotabato Metropolitan region has also been wrestling for the release of a $229-million land-reclamation fund for infrastructure development in the region. The fund is supposed to cover the construction of the Cotabato City diversion road, among others.

He said the South government has committed to the funds since 1997, but the national government, through the Department of Budget and Management, has not included the acceptance of the loan due to lingering fiscal problems.

But Sema said Cotabato City is about to execute a P19-million grant from the USAID for small infrastructure projects.

NOKIA
Inspire
The Nokia Snaparazzi
Westgate & ATC shooting
spree!
SNAPparazzi
They came, they carried and they were snapped by the Nokia Snaparazzi
NOKIA
Connecting People

Hot money flows into the market

AFTER A QUIET WEEK, I LET ROBBIE ARIS decided to do something I have wanted to do for about a year. I bought a large, flat LCD TV from his store's holdings as these commonly for a long time but they are too expensive. However, prices have been falling and with my commissions, I was able to get a 25-over mortgage with zero interest. The bank fined it so that my last payment will coincide with my 100th birthday. Unfortunately, my children are rather timid so to make room for the TV we had to get rid of our bed. We are now sleeping on the floor on tatami mats, Japanese style.

My daughter said I watched the Lion King, Pavarotti, Sound of Music, and best of all, the Phantom of the Opera, which came out a few weeks ago. The clarity was extraordinary, totally as good as the demo tapes, and she was jumping up and down with excitement. Eventually, when I have finally paid off the TV, we will buy another bed.

The neighbor liked it too with one of his two sons. In a fit of rage, he went to a lawyer, threw the will on his desk and said, "I want an heir." Initially this is a variation of a joke about a bottles done. They discussed that the issue of his/her very large investment property since he/she agreed to the arrangement. They said it is irrevocable.

Now that the will has gone into effect, there will be unexpected changes. For example, farmers will find that fertilizer will become too expensive; musicians will discover that a pianoforte is now a plaintiff. Even the contemporary chairs will be affected. In fact, the last time, who had one 3-6 will pay 6-7. The 110-meter dash will be lengthened to 118, meters and golfers will score play 70-fifteen.

According to a Bobbit newspaper, the Chinese President Hujintao crossed the Queen's few weeks ago. He rode Jewel—the stud in the Queen's coach and stopped just outside the palace. "The Chinese President is here, Your Majesty," said a servant. "Who?" said the Queen. "Yes, he has been waiting 5 minutes." "I quite forgot. I think I need a filip". Fortunately, Prince Philip was standing just behind her.

I'll MM a boring week in the stock market, at least for the first 4 days. The Phisix just drifted lower everyday in low volume. On Friday, my

solar-powered wristy broke down owing to dark clouds and I noticed about 20 minutes late. To my surprise, the market was booming except for TEL. It was partly due to reduction in the October deficit from P30 billion to P7 billion, and partly to the strength of the peso. Even so, the ticket was closed on the week of the three foreign buying of P68 million on Friday was wholly attributable to AC (P50 million).

Inc. I is fast approaching at the new index stocks may have further to rise, and around the middle of next month, all the blue chips will be marked up or sold. Meanwhile, it happens every year and with the political issues more settled, this year should be no exception. Hold the lenders until Jan. 10 or thereabouts. It has been right to do this 9 years out of 10.

I do not know what has happened to First Gen. The head of the company is in jail and has not heard anything, nor have some of the underwriters. If the prosperous does not appear soon, it will run into the Christmas season and may have to be delisted until next year. A pity since this will be a much-sought IPO.

As you know, I like to keep track of investments worldwide. The Nasdaq is at a 6-1/2 year high, the Nikkei is at a 5-year high, and some major stocks are at a 5-1/2-year high. Also, at a 4-1/2 year high is gold, up $19 in 2 days. With everything else booming, we are still 40-percent below our 2000 high of 1,658 so I think we are just starting to play catch-up.

The outlook is certainly better now that the VAT law is in effect and with three billionaires in the prime of period (I don't know the American word), the price is almost back to the pre-Eid era. We don't have a 9-percent discount reserve to lure, but not until 2006. I expect there will be a IMF across the board increase in March (a year though CAMBER says it will close down on factories and move to China. They say it will

Credit Lyonnais unit turns bullish on RP

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

CREDIT LYONNAIS SECURITIES (Asia) Inc. (CLSA) has become bullish on the Philippines after the implementation of the expanded value-added tax last June 1.

In a research report, CLSA Philippines Inc. head of research Alfred Dy said the VAT law could help push the stock market index to 2,300 by 2006 since the new tax measure continues to a stronger peso and will translate into increases in interest rates at bay.

But even with the expected growth in the index level, the Philippines may still be lagging as a proxies compared with other emerging markets like Thailand and Indonesia.

"The (Philippine) market is now trading at a full year 2005 price-to-earnings ratio of 15 times earnings-per-share growth of 30 percent in 2005, and 10.4 times for 2006 on earnings growth of 11 percent (in 2006). Closely the market remains extremely cheap to the markets in Thailand and Indonesia," Dy wrote.

Yesterday, the PSE composite index surged 2.3 percent to 2,126.58 or 46.18 points.

The VAT law is expected to generate P3 billion in revenues this year for the government coffers and P66-bil-lion in year-on-year in 2006.

It said the removal of VAT exemptions on certain industries should raise P66 billion a year for the government while the lifting of the tax holiday to 10 percent in January 2006 should raise P16 billion a year.

The VAT law removes exemptions of several industries such as electricity, petroleum and transportation.

It also gives an option to the President to raise the VAT rate to 12 percent in January 2006 from 10 percent should the VAT collection be more than 2.5 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) and if the fiscal budget deficit was not

Elated by VAT passage

1.5 percent of GDP.

The government had said the successful implementation of the VAT law would result to a budget deficit of less than P3.66 billion this year, or 2.4 percent of GDP, and P125 billion next year or 2.1 percent of GDP.

"We believe that the VAT should result in a stronger currency and stable interest rates. Note that both of these are supportive of a stronger stock market. In fact, since the VAT was implemented, the stock market is up 6.4 percent (as of Nov. 8 when the report was released) while the currency has mildly appreciated to P54.6 to $1 from P54.88," Dy said.

Dy added that even if President Macapagal-Arroyo decides not to implement the increase in the VAT rate from 10 percent to 12 percent, the Philippine budget deficit should reach P116 billion, which is equivalent to 2.7 percent of the GDP.

"This worst-case scenario is still good as our views given 10 billion deficit as a percentage to GDP was at 5 percent a couple of years back," Dy said in his report.

Treasury bill rates . . .

From page B1

equivalent to 100 basis points.)

"The usefulness of the market as the fiscal purchase shows consistent over positive manner. It continues to gain momentum, and there is no question about how it will end the year," Cruz said in a briefing after the auction.

The Bureau of Treasury last week announced that the national government's budget deficit for the first 10 months of the year stood at only 113.5 billion, or P40.5 billion below the P154 billion ceiling set for the period.

The national government has officially set a budget deficit ceiling of P180 billion this year, or 3.4 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). This was down from P147 billion, or 3.9 percent of GDP, for 2004.

But the fiscal over performance as of the first 10 months suggested that the deficit figure for the full year would be much lower than the P180 billion ceiling, authorities said.

"My cash position is incredibly good. They (market) will not see these very high rates for a long time," Cruz said.

He said some P4.2 billion worth of maturing government securities (treasury bills and bonds) will be rolled over, hopefully a large part of which is expected to be placed again in treasury bills and bonds, thus putting more downward pressure on interest rates.

With the high level of liquidity in the market, Cruz said investors were also expected to assemble for the auction of seven-, ten- and twenty-year bonds to be offered by state-owned National Power Corp. (Napocor) today. (See story on page B2.)

Metrobank sells ₱6.8B worth . . .

From page B1

but would also explain huge market transactions with foreign and local institutional buyers to substantially reduce, if not completely dispose, of, to foreclosed asset portfolio by mid-year.

The transaction was done over-the-counter (OTC) through the Special Purpose Vehicle Law, which empowered Metrobank and other banks to help banks get rid of their bad assets by enabling the investors to buy money tax, capital gains tax and VAT (expanded value-added tax) and by reducing the registration/transfer fees by 50 percent.

Metrobank's total transactions stood at 9461.4 billion as of Monday (November 14) reported a 15 percent growth in year-end to P12 billion for the first nine months of the year from P10.44 billion a year ago.

Benguet, Philex reverse losses in 3rd quarter

MAJOR MINING FIRMS REPORTED MIXED results for the third quarter, with Benguet Corp. and Philex Mining reversing previous net losses.

Benguet said its net income for the third quarter hit P113 million, a turnaround from the net loss of P63 million in the same period last year.

For the nine-month period, Benguet also saw its consolidated net losses to P40 million from P185 million in the same period last year.

Benguet said consolidated revenues declined to P63 million in the third quarter from P82 million in the same quarter of 2004.

For the nine-month period, operating revenues grew 5 percent to P233 million from P222 million in 2004, due to improved ship-ment of chromite during the year.

Its largest nonfuel mining project in Benguet also continued to show profitability, recording a net income of P6 million for the quarter and P11 million for the nine-month period.

Its Masinloc chromite operation in Zambales meanwhile suffered net losses of P6 million in the third quarter and P17 million in the nine-month period. The losses were mainly due to higher cost of sales and write-off of chromite inventories.

Philex, on the other hand, said its consolidated net income for the first nine months of 2005 amounted to P206.4 million, a significant turnaround from a net loss of P203.1 million in the same period last year.

The increase is consistent shipments to 39,986 tons, containing copper and gold, and higher metal prices at $1.63 a pound for copper and $406 an ounce for gold, from last year's prices of $1.06 and $390, respectively, resulting revenues to P4.4 billion this year from P3.1 billion last year.

The increase in revenue was partly offset by higher operating cost and expenses of P3.0 billion this year from P2.1 billion last year. Its entire Dizon operations stood at P463.3 million, a much-needed improvement from the prior year's P3 billion.

On the other hand, top gold producer and one of the country's oldest mining firms, Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co., reported a consolidated net loss of P184.6 million in the nine months from an income of P20 million in the same period last year due to lower gold production as a result of a 106-day labor strike that lasted until Sept. 11. Bloomberg, Inquirer

Shares . . .

From page B1

day, the index gained 2.2 percent.

Investors have been cheered by the implementation of the expanded value-added tax last month that should help to finally improve the government's budget situation. And the October budget deficit data posted last week showed that the government is managing to keep its spending under control.

Blue chip Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. was the most actively traded stock, up 1.7 percent in P1,795, on the positive earnings outlook for the full year of the country's biggest telecommunications group.

The unannounced departures of key officials of PLDT mobile phone unit Smart Communications didn't hold investor sentiment, traders said. AP

Philippine Stock Exchange Index

Stocks	Close (November 21, 2005)	1 Day	1 Week	1 Month	Year to Date
Banks & Financial Services					
Ayala Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bank of the Philippine Islands	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Banco de Oro Universal Bank	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
China Banking Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Equitable PCI Bank	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Philippine National Bank	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Philippine Savings Bank	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Security Bank Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Union Bank of the Philippines	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Commercial & Industrial					
Alaska Milk Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Ayala Land Inc.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Megaworld Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Robinsons Land Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mining & Oil					
Atlas Consolidated Mining & Dev. Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Benguet Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Manila Mining Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nickel Asia Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Philex Mining Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Semirara Mining Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Property					
Ayala Land Inc.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Megaworld Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Robinsons Land Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Services					
Ayala Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bloomberry Resorts Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Globe Telecom Inc.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Jollibee Foods Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Manila Electric Co.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Holding Firms					
Ayala Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Alliance Global Group Inc.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
SM Investments Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Industrial					
Atlas Consolidated Mining & Dev. Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Benguet Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Manila Mining Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nickel Asia Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Philex Mining Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Semirara Mining Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Metrobank (11, 2005) Country	Unit	Peso Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
Australia	Dollar	0.6667	1.00000	0.6731
Japan	Yen	0.00728	1.00000	0.6731
United Kingdom	Pound	1.40289	1.19400	0.6731
Canada	Dollar	0.7368	1.00000	0.6731
Switzerland	Franc	0.6473	1.00000	0.6731
Canada	Dollar	0.7368	1.00000	0.6731
Australia	Dollar	0.6667	1.00000	0.6731
Australia	Dollar	0.6667	1.00000	0.6731
Australia	Dollar	0.6667	1.00000	0.6731
Financial Institutions				
Bank of the Philippine Islands	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Banco de Oro Universal Bank	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
China Banking Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Equitable PCI Bank	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Philippine National Bank	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Philippine Savings Bank	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Security Bank Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Union Bank of the Philippines	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Conglomerates & Holding Companies				
Ayala Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Alliance Global Group Inc.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
SM Investments Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Property				
Ayala Land Inc.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Megaworld Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Robinsons Land Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Services				
Ayala Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bloomberry Resorts Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Globe Telecom Inc.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Jollibee Foods Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Manila Electric Co.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Holding Firms				
Ayala Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Alliance Global Group Inc.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
SM Investments Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Industrial				
Atlas Consolidated Mining & Dev. Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Benguet Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Manila Mining Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Nickel Asia Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Philex Mining Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Semirara Mining Corp.	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

LIFESTYLE

MONDAY ARTS & BOOKS • TUESDAY FITNESS • WEDNESDAY 18U • THURSDAY FOOD • FRIDAY FASHION & BEAUTY

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Triceps dip

STRENGTHENS AND TONES the back of the arms

Equipment

Gym bench or chair.

Exercise methodology

1. Place your hands on the edge of a gym bench or chair.

2. Keep your arms close to your body with your knuckles pointing straight ahead.

3. Bend your knees as you thighs and lower legs from slightly more than a 90-degree angle.

4. Bend your elbows and slowly lower your body.

5. Straighten the elbows to raise the body up.

Performance tips

1. Inhale on the way down, exhale as you lift up.

2. Don't allow the elbows to flare out to the sides as you lower and raise the body.

3. Don't allow your chest and chin to collapse as you lower your body down.

4. Don't use your legs and feet to push your body up; resist.

5. The farther your body is from the bench, the longer and heavier your body becomes and the harder the triceps have to work. If you need to lighten the load, keep your body close to the bench.

6. Avoid this exercise if you have problems with your shoulder or wrist joints.

Repetitions

Start with as many as you can do. Work up to eight to 12 repetitions.

How to prevent shoulder injuries when lifting weights

THE THREE AREAS OF THE BODY THAT ARE most prone to injury during resistance or strength training are the lower back, knee and shoulder joint.

The shoulders are particularly vulnerable because they are designed to have a large range of motion. This increased mobility comes at the price of increased susceptibility. Almost all upper-body exercises require the use of the shoulders because so many muscle groups cross over the joint.

Here are guidelines to prevent shoulder injuries when you lift weights:

Rotator cuff. Four small muscles go around the shoulder joint like a cuff and hold your arm firmly in the socket. They are collectively known as the "rotator cuff" muscles. They can easily become irritated and inflamed when they are weak and overused.

If you lift heavy weights, it is a must to strengthen these muscles. Likewise, if you do sports like badminton or tennis which require repetitive overhead movements.

Older people also need rotator cuff strengthening because the muscles atrophy or penalize us.

The exercises can be done with dumbbells, rubber tubing or special weight machines. Do not use heavy dumbbells; go to exercises like pantdown jobs, club or exercises, click on shoulder's, chin-click on External Rotator Cuff with Dumbbells or Internal Rotator Cuff with Dumbbells.

Behind-the-neck. Personal therapist and resistance-training expert Tess Pareja says that behind-the-neck "lat pull-downs" and "shoulder presses" are "shoulder killers" because they are unnatural movements for the shoulder joint. It's safer to do these exercises in front of the body.

Think about it—if you had to place a heavy barbell on a high shelf, you would not do it with your arms behind your neck. The same reasoning applies if you had to pull on a rope attached to a heavy weight. You would not do it behind your neck either because you are strongest with your arms out in front of you.

Correct alignment. Using a very wide grip on a bench press puts unnecessary strain on the shoulder joint as you lower the barbell. For all bench presses, whether incline, flat or decline, use a grip that is slightly wider than shoulder width and bring your elbows to shoulder level or slightly below.

The traditional dumbbell fly exercises can also be troublesome for the shoulders because the shoulder is in a vulnerable and weakened position when the arms are extended. Instead of extending your arms like you are hugging a tree, keep your elbows slightly bent and your hands facing each other as you lower the dumbbells to the sides.

Equipment. Two dumbbells. Go to www.fitnessmachines.com.ph for more information.

Exercise methodology

1. Lie on your back on a bench with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor.

2. Hold the dumbbells with your palms facing each other as you lower the dumbbells to the sides.

3. Bring your elbows up to shoulder level.

4. Lower the dumbbells to the sides.

5. Repeat.

Push-up. Push-ups, chest parallel dips and push-ups, teach that you do not lower your body so far down that your elbows are no longer in line with your shoulders.

Do not go beyond shoulder level when doing these exercises. Avoid upright rows if you can because the exercise forces you to bring your elbows higher than shoulder level under load, thus compromising your joints. If you still insist on doing this exercise, then at least limit potential injury by only bringing the elbows to shoulder level.

Lift steadily. Lifting weights with momentum can be a cause of shoulder injuries. The clichés you hit the weight, the more the forces surrounding the shoulder joint have to act to "brake." The greater momentum your load has:

Appropriate amount of weights. Some people like to lift weights that are too heavy for them. They do this because they like the challenge or they are trying to impress other people in the gym. Lifting weights that are too heavy for you makes you lose control of the correct execution of the exercises and forces other muscles and connective tissue to compensate for your loss of control.

Avoid instruments. Not only should you to excuse yourself to avoid instruments but you should also give your shoulder and joints enough time to get strong so that weight-bearing exercises do not be new exercises.

If you have already injured your shoulders, you need to be extra careful about this. "Too much, too soon" will only lead to more injury.

Stretch. Stretch all the muscles that cross the shoulder joint so you keep the joint flexible. Remember that tight muscles can also be a cause of injury.

Visit www.wellandgood.com.ph

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Jacot

Too much self-confidence can be detrimental to your health

THE WORLD WE LIVE IN urges you: use enriched to self-satisfaction, fulfillment and accomplishment. Pleasure there seems nothing wrong with having self-confidence or self-esteem here you build it would be detrimental to your physical and mental health if the boundaries of moderation are breached. Here's how, in fifteen statements that cover the body, mind and spirit:

Body

"I'm lazy." Nobody sees and you have to remain active 24/7 at your time, but by claiming laziness you justify not exercising, working, getting off your bed. Studies have shown that couch potatoes do end up as sluggish acquisitions themselves. More and more studies reveal that people who move less are more prone to illness than their more active counterparts.

"I'm starved." The stomach, if you study digestion, is hardly ever empty. Because the entire process takes anywhere from three to five hours, by the time snacks are served, your lunch is in call the final stages of digesting.

In urban hunger pangs arise you, don't be flattened. Eat something raw, like fruits and vegetables. This way, they get to occupy your tummy leaving less room for foods you normally crave for. Giving in to cravings may become a habit which could eventually become a lifestyle.

"I'm tired." When your body speaks to you, listen. Much like a traffic light, the message remains a yellow warning, slow down. Take it easy. Tiredness is only a signal to practice the three R's—relax, rest, recharge.

"I'm sick." Sickness is the stage you reach probably because you ignored the yellow signal. Definitely, you will need to treat all activity and have complete rest. At this time, detox yourself by rebalancing your system with liquids—water, coconut water as well as vegetable and fruit juices.

Mind

"I'm depressed." The rhythms and drones of your mind are contained in the brain, so closely linked that becomed changes in your mood directly affect your emotions. Before you declare yourself as depressed, study your pattern. Find out the emotion in your life that are causing it. Do some mind-body-relaxation regimens like yoga, walking, swimming. Basically, exercise can stimulate your brain to release endorphins which can put you in a state of ease. Drink calming herbal teas. Have a massage. If all else fails, see a doctor.

Caution: There are some people who take pleasure in their pain and who enjoy misery. While this may only be an unconscious drive on their part, it pays to find a sympathetic ear who is aware of this pitfall.

"I'm a boss." The mind is a highly programmable computer. If constantly bombarded with negative thoughts such as this, it will eventually start believing it by triggering the self to fail in all aspects of living—relationships, career, health, finances and personal outlook.

Spirit

"I'm invincible." To adopt a manner of indestructibility places undue pressure and demands on the psyche. Admit the fine line between spirit and mind is unclear and undefined, this statement could be interpreted as a state of mind. Telling yourself that nothing and no one can hurt you may make you callous to realities like sickness, grief, heartache, pollution, industrialism, stress.

By thinking of invincibility, you may not take precaution for your precious self against illness. And like in the case of a friend, a 50-year-old businessman who took no cognizance and would boast to friends that he never got sick. While he might have had a physically appealing physique, little did he know that one day he would collapse due to a heart attack. Apparently his body was deprived of magnesium for so long. He has since recovered and is now living a more balanced lifestyle.

Daily invasion

The art of resolving positive thoughts and feelings is perhaps the best line items of the mind. Much like praise, it seeks to resolve blockages with gratitude. Invoke daily something good, whether big or small. And watch the days ahead unfold divinely. Gratitude: "Every day, thinking is some one way."

Love and light!

Letter from UK re alternate reality

'Two total strangers can be 'transported' to each others' houses

DR. PETER STEWART, A RETIRED scientist from the aeronautical and space industry in England, wrote me the following letter mainly in thanks for introducing him to the wonders of remote-viewing. I had written about the subject in a chapter of "Vacation at Work," which was published in San Francisco, California, in 1996.

"I hold a Doctor of Science degree, the highest academic level in the UK. I also have a Master of Science degree. I am a physicist being a Fellow of the Institution of Physics and a Fellow of the Institution of Mechanical and Electrical Engineering. In 1985, I went 'the-ground-to-the-top-engineer' in the UK and was invited to become a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering. I have been a visiting professor at two British Universities.

"I have been a 'dowser' for over 50 years using both 'lazyS' and 'remote' dowsing techniques. I am chair of the Dowsing Research Group of the British Society of Dowsers. As an example, I successfully located a crashed aircraft in the sea, at a depth of 280 ft, from my home in Scotland using map dowsing at a distance of 350 miles to the RAF, we are looking into the relationships between awareness of remote-viewing and information.

Remote viewing

"Back in 1999, I bought a copy of 'Invitation to Mind' and read your article on remote-viewing with interest. I decided to try out your techniques and found that, like you, I could 'transport' copies of two total strangers to each others' houses and get them to remote-view the interior. From that, I have been developing the technique at lectures, seminars and workshops. After the viewing, I invited them to speak and they both then fill in a questionnaire on what they have seen. This is then catalogued in silence and marked for accuracy and returned. This percentage always is collusion. Only then are they allowed to share their experiences. I get a 60 - 70 percent success rate of over 200 students. All my students have a full sensory experience of the alternate reality and hold meaningful conversations with people they meet.

"When they stand outside the other person's house I now ask them to call out for a copy of the partner to come out and show their personal effects.

"From your article, it appears that your students only observe? I find that I can get my students to interact with the reality in which they find themselves and lift up chairs, pick up objects, open drawers and look inside, etc. Do they do this?

"Within the last two years, in order to try and find the boundaries of the capability, I have sent a group of dowsers to locate a lost British Man-Probe using Martian coordinates and their remote-from the small site and descend to the physical area of the probe. This was successful.

"I suppose that dowsing and remote viewing are two sides of the same coin. One can remote-dowse for a lost object using a map and obtain its geographical coordinates. But one cannot see it. One can then remote-view on the coordinates previously dowsed and view the site.

"I have also, on two separate occasions, sent a group of students back to specific locations in time and space to interview individuals in order to obtain information. The first occasion was to send a group of 30 back to London 1838 to interview John Parkinson, the royal herbalist to Charles II to ask questions for one of his descendants who was having his leg septic. This was again successful and one of the students complained it was very 'smelly' and the personal hygiene of John Parkinson left something to be desired!"

"On the second occasion, I successfully sent a group of eight students back to a country house, Moncliffe Castle, in Wales in 1894 to interview the six inhabitants and question them about a miscarriage of justice where a young woman was unjustly hanged. This was for historical research.

"In all cases, the students have a full sensory experience and believe they were 'physically' present at the location and reality. There are physical interactions between the students and the people they meet, like being given a cup of liquid to drink.

"So, I thank you for starting me on this line of research with your article. It was very useful. I am now contracted to write a book, 'The Rediscovery of the Third Eye,' latest 1999. I have run an informal course for the study of extended human consciousness, by the introductory Level 1 course. I successfully teach psychometry, telepathy, dowsing and remote-viewing."

My reply: Thank you for your feedback. I am glad to know you have successfully adopted the techniques of remote-viewing as I teach it here in the Philippines and you have gone several steps further. The answer to your questions is, yes, in one case, my students merely observe and describe what they see. They are not asked to interact or interfere with the place they find themselves in, except on occasions when they encounter a dominant spirit, in which case they ask why it is there and then help it to ascend to the spirit world. I look forward to reading your book on the Third Eye when it comes out.

All about skincare and treatment

MIRROR, THE HEALTHY Lifestyle Magazine parks its November issue with tips on skincare and information on skin treatment, including a guide to the proper chemical peel that suits your skin type, how it works, which type is best for you, possible complications it may give rise to, how much it costs and more.

It also gives the get pointers on how to maintain soft and supple skin, as well as advice from certified dermatologists on keeping your hair healthy.

Jon Cabasis, one of today's most promising actresses, talks about how she won her battle against being overweight and inspires other women by sharing with them how she coped with the many changes in her life and found happiness.

Leading dermatologist Elizabeth Nitoda V. Tiamzo wrote in her column about how the skin not only serves an aesthetic function but also protects the body, regulates temperature, reserves calorie, among other functions.

Mirror, edited by seven journalism alumni from Feu-Fe, is a publication of the Philippine Graphic, Inc., which also puts out the Philippine Graphic Newsweekly Magazine, Cosmo, The Culinary Lifestyle Magazine and Business Mirror daily broadsheet.

Digest offers stories on health and nutrition

IN THE LATEST NEWS DIGEST OF Healthy Options, the company commemorates the health chain's 10th anniversary with the recent inauguration of a modern and expansive cafe-concept-cultural workplace and warehouse facility.

As part of Healthy Options' 10-year celebration of pure, natural living, the news digest offers articles on women's health, men's health, nutrition, sexual and body natural beauty, supplement and book review. "Get Pregnant at 40!" gives advice on how to assess the odds of getting pregnant. "Treating Kidney Diseases Naturally" outlines studies on the kidney stone healer and remedies.

In the Mind and Body section, "Dealing with Loss" takes up the different aspects of loss such as the death of a loved one, miscarriage, end of a marriage or relationship, long-standing debilitating illness and other setbacks.

The "Nutrition section talks about how apple juice protects the heart. In the Better Choices, Better Life sidebar, find out more about how eating beans or lentils at least twice a week may reduce a woman's risk of developing breast cancer.

The latest Healthy Options News Digest is given free to customers at stores in Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Rustan's Supermarket Makati, Rustan's Supermall Alabang, Ayala Center Cebu, SM City North Edsa, SM City Manila, Greenhills, Ayala Center Makati, SM Megamall E-Gil-

ss, and SM Pampanga. Visit www.healthyoptions.com.ph

FIRST Secretary Alain Perrin, late political writer Ana Maria Ponsioen and Karl Wilson of Agence France Presse

ROBERT de Quelen and daughter Samantha, with host Ipsen Lulu Tan Gan

MARIE Tanguy, popular Grace Glory Goo! Philippine Star and publisher Ethel Tenbrook of Manila Bulletin

MARJORIE Pilon and Patrick Salton of IADB

Departures and openings, diplomatic and otherwise

CBS Hosts' Gabby Tabuena

AMAL Bakkoush of Moroccan Foundation

THE MOST and ALREADY SO POPULAR French Ambassador Gerard Chesnel and his extra-humorous Indonesian wife, Madame Ning Chesnel, hosted a super fun farewell reception for outgoing press attaché, well-loved once-chair Benedicte Illeyaram, at their sprawling well-manicured residence.

Close pals from humanitarian organizations, as well as members of the French community and the media (thanks to Benedicte as the first large gathering hosted by the newly designated ambassador).

Benedicte, who started her tour of duty in September 2001, will be replaced as press attaché by two-time(!) Miss Camille Lacroix.

Camille was the press attaché in the French embassy in Malaysia from 1997-2001. Since 1979, she has been a civil servant in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where she assumed different responsibilities in the press and human resources departments and was a member of the minister's entourage.

Short birth gals worked together in the French Embassy's Foreign Affairs Section, Benedicte and Camille became the closest of pals, dishing. During the reception, the ambassador even cracked a joke and said, "The two women have a lot of things in common, but they will go on a different. Benedicte has a smart dog, while Camille has a lovely cat."

The night was made total- ly memorable with fantastic music and sing- along- numbers by the magnificent, awesome Zantuga brothers, Ike and Greg, with Lee Morris-Martinez.

As events go, this Benedicte- Camille, for sure, is forever, Madame Camille!

MARIA Olivarezki

CHALT Enquimotan Miss Enriquez

BEAUTIFUL women of substance and style, Amelia Salton and brilliant Supreme Court administrator Zosy Esquivel

THE EMBASSY'S MEN: press attaché Camille Lacroix, French ambassador's wife Madame Ning and Ambassador Gerard Chesnel; the luscious, outgoing press attaché; elections Benedicte Illeyaram and her gorgeous niece Mary

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH
Maurice Arcache
Photos by Alex Van Hagen using Kodak Easy Share

On-the-spot pasta

Manila's passionate Italian restaurateur, D'Aperta, finally reopened its doors to tons of their waiting patrons at its new spacious home at The Fort in Bonifacio, conveniently celebrating its 13th anniversary.

True to form, white-gloved waiters served sinfully and exquisite Italian fare. Favorites, unanimously whipped up by in-talented executive chef Lothar Moreno Matsui, pronto!

As true Italian fashion, table- mate, darlings, fresh pasta was prepared on the spot, wowing us to a feast of Mushroom Ravioli in Cream Sauce and Seafood Bucatini in Pomodoro Sauce.

For desserts, it was an assortment of calorific, absolutely yummy but lethal eclairs, cream puffs and Italian cake. White wine- and champagne flowed freely. We were spoiled with a culinary feast in this fabulous, fabulous setting.

Among those were top sponsors like Premiere Wine & Spirits, Galileo Trading, Aquafil, Amoris, Eco Asia, Bacchus International, Italfood and Hershey International.

Hey, we all have a reason never to expose because we once again look forward to the divine flavors of D'Aperta's regional Tuscan cuisine, as well as bold, new aromas created by "del maestro di cucina" and executive sumser Khristine M.

Together with owners Benito Ros, General Sevilla and Raul Sapa, D'Aperta restores as a bigger and brighter location where we can applaud the authentic flavors and the personalized touch of D'Aperta once again, paisanos.

But that's not all. Soon, D'Aperta will offer a gourmet take- which will lend itself to key brunch experiences and a real champagne taste in the evenings. Isn't that so, ladies?

Portuguese festival

The hot passion and spirit of today's Portugal opened to an international crowd speaking in different languages that one thought I was at a UN meeting, palengke!

It was actually the 4th Portuguese Festival which high-end chic Rustasis in Makati celebrated. There was a panning exhibition on the veranda- level windows and table settings, all done by well-known Filipino artist Phyllis Zabala-Sison, plus top Portuguese products by world's chefs Joanda Mendonca, Gilberto Gomes, Ambrosio (bartender) and Carrie from Tesoro for the excellent wine, whose representative raved praises from Portugal.

Heading the pack of the-the invitees were of respective Portuguese ambassador Jose Cancana da Silva, and well-loved Ambassador Bienvenido Tantoco Jr. of the Boston Group of Companies, natch.

As one circulated, my eagle eyes caught the colorful paintings of Phyllis Z., where she captured perfectly the land, life and cuisine of Portugal, palengke.

Cosmo Manila's chic diplo-community was present and all- accounted for, darlings. Two hundred of our town's creamiest of the cream attended, headed by the charming Portuguese ambassador's wife, Antonia Ortiz de Silva, who told me such an amusing story on how her husband would watch her eating habits while he was nourishing-ize in Madrid. How she's fit as a fiddle and is a health junkie like me.

Well, busy as a bee was Air France-KLM's biggest, brilliant asset Binga Bengzon, the ultimate top marketing manager who helped organize the VIP-centers, palengke.

The stunningly succeeded Portuguese festival, superbly organized and created by Galleria Dominika's Silvana Silao, is the result of the close partnership and teamwork of various parties from both countries: Instituto, the Department of Foreign Affairs, Air France-KLM, Food Industry Confederation and Ralph's Wines & Spirits, locally and, in Portugal, the External Trade Institute, Cultural Institute and Other Foundations, darlings.

CO-OWNER Paolo Mei, Dario Gardini, lovelies Marion and Jessa Khang

HEY, BEAUTIFUL. Head runners Monica Albert, Abet Abreo, Tricia Lopez and Ria Lopez

IN DEMAND: Marvie Reyes, body-beautiful Cory Quirino, Enid Ways and Rea Jamisa

HOTSHOTS at the opening of the successful Portuguese festival: Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, Silvana Dias, artist Phyllis Zabalbero, Ambassador Bienvenido Tantoco Sr., Ambassador Jose Caetano da Silva, adorable Southern lady Ms. Rosalinda Orosa and Senora Ofelia da Silva

THE ITALIAN CONNECTION. Michael Allan, Roger Pollis and ex-grand chef Marcos Matsui

ABBA PAPA, con-ducting daughter of-one of the owners, and architect Arnon Mendoza

STEPHEN and Lolita Sy of Pecan Global, Dennis Tantoco of Shoprite and Billy Yulico

AMBASSADOR Jan de Kok of the European Commission

ANNE Jeremias Gonzales, Freddie Gonzales and Jon Sytiaco

DUTCH CONNECTION. Popular Dutch Ambassador Hakuni Yarma; former Belgian Ambassador Christian Soyhs; Air France-KLM top exec, marketing manager Binga Bengzon and Tess Zobarte, marketing support Air France-KLM exec

THE INTERNATIONAL SET. Dr. Luis Camacho, deputy head of mission of Portugal; Joao Schwarzer, chancellor Franklin Silva of Portugal and Fernando Carneiro Garcia

CHUSE Paripoot Francis Agabalos and husband, rock 'n roll man Ramon Jacinto; and Chin Peping Puritpot